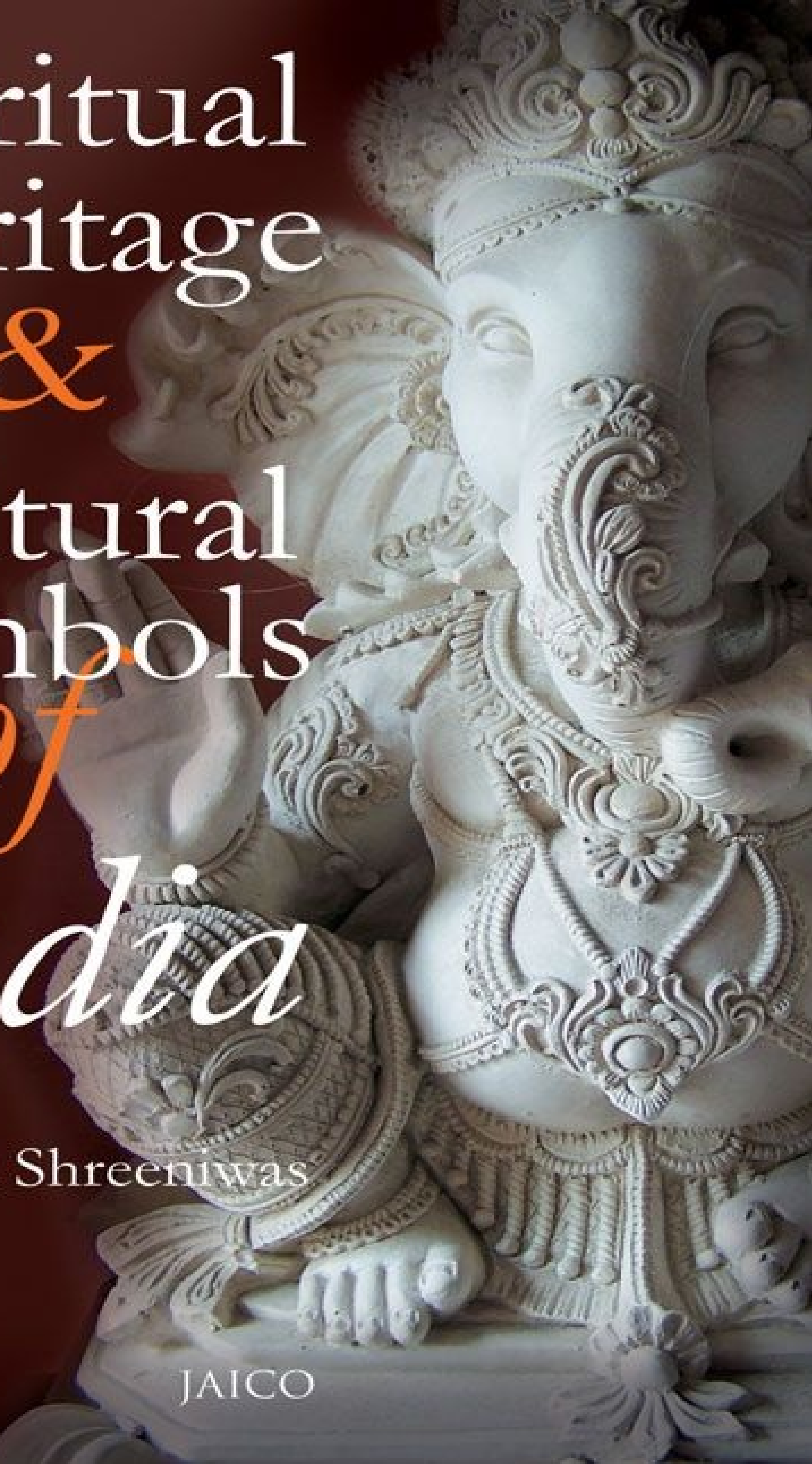
Spiritual Heritage & Cultural Symbols of India



Jhaver P. Shreeniwas

JAICO

Spiritual Heritage & Cultural Symbols of *India*

Jhaver P. Shreeniwas

JAICO PUBLISHING HOUSE

Ahmedabad Bangalore Bhopal Bhubaneswar Chennai
Delhi Hyderabad Kolkata Lucknow Mumbai

Published by Jaico Publishing House
A-2 Jash Chambers, 7-A Sir Phirozshah Mehta Road
Fort, Mumbai - 400 001
jaicopub@jaicobooks.com
www.jaicobooks.com

© Jhaver P. Shreeniwas

SPIRITUAL HERITAGE & CULTURAL SYMBOLS OF INDIA
ISBN 81-7224-736-2

First Jaico Impression: 1999
Revised Edition: 2009

No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in
any form or by any means, electronic or
mechanical including photocopying, recording or by any
information storage and retrieval system,
without permission in writing from the publishers.

Printed by
Repro India Limited
Plot No. 50/2, T.T.C. MIDC Industrial Area
Mahape, Navi Mumbai - 400 710

Dedication

This volume is dedicated to scholars of occult sciences. Total proceeds received by the author from this source shall be utilised for encouraging advanced studies.

Jhaver P. Shreenivas

Aum God & Me

I asked God for strength to achieve;
I was made weak to learn humbly to obey;
I solicited good health to do great things;
I was given infirmity to do better things;
I asked for riches that I might be happy;
1 was granted poverty that I might be wise;
I asked for power to enjoy praise by men;
I got weakness so that I realise the need of God;
I asked for all things to enjoy life better;
I was given life, except everything I had asked;
Despite myself, unspoken prayers were answered;
I am among all men, most richly blessed! Amen!

About the Author

Mr. Shreeniwas was born in a pious family at Gwalior on 18th July, 1917. In 1937, he joined Imperial Bank at Indore. In 1949, he joined a British firm as Manager in Delhi. During his stay in Delhi, he was elected Director of Rotary when there was only one Rotary Club in New Delhi. In 1966, he became General Manager of Hindusthan Sugar Mills Ltd., the largest sugar producing mill in Asia; and in 1968, he was appointed Chief Executive of Shree Digvijaya Cement Co. Ltd. at Mumbai.

To be of service to society, he became the Secretary of Bal Bharti, an institution established for teacher's training and education from Primary upto Post Graduation; Jr. Secretary of Bhartiya Kala Kendra (Now Sir Shreeram Kalakendra), Vice president of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, and Lok Kalyan Samity — an institution established by Hon'ble Sucheta Kriplani; All these institutions enjoy international reputation. LKS is devoted to the service and help of slum dwellers and the poorer sections of Delhi. LKS owns one of the finest eye care hospital in India. Thus, despite his hectic life he devoted time to be of service and help to the weaker sections of society.

He has made it a mission to go wherever invited to spread awareness regarding Therapractical Radiant Yoga (TRY) as propagated by Rishi Patanjali, enabling persons to enjoy healthy/happy life. The results have been very reassuring and rewarding. "Come walking return laughing."

This philanthropic experience moved him to read spiritual literature most of which is in Sanskrit or translations thereof in English and other languages, detailing the laudable achievements of the Rishis and Yogis. But those heights are unattainable by worldly persons, so he contacted enlightened souls to ascertain the metaphysical successes attained by modern scientists, clairvoyants and saints. This authentic collection and compilation illuminates a renaissance in spiritual heritage for aspiring minds to persue the spiritual paths of sublimation and bliss. To realize Him is the supreme goal of human existence and He can be realized through many chosen paths. Vedant teaches good of all. Indian Philosophy reveals the process of immediate perception and experience rather than abstract scepticism and arguments. Amen!

Contents

Prelude

Preface

Invocation

Aum

Pranayam, Cosmic Energy Control

Sanskrit

Guru (Teacher)

Yogi, Rishi

Maun (Silence)

Aura, Halo, Prabhamandal

Mantra, Tantra, Yantra

Sadhana (Transcendental, Meditation)

Havan, Yajna, Sacrificial Fire

The Mystic Romance of Some Celestial Figure

God Realisation: Idols Help

God Sun (Giver of Life & Vigour)

Yogeshwar Shree Krishna

Shree Rama, Ideal for Humanity

Shree Hanuman an Ideal for Devotion and Loyalty

Maa — Mother Adi Shakti

God Shiva (Ardhnarishwar)

Rudra, Natraj Shiva

Shree Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth

Saraswati, Goddess of Learning

Lord Ganesha (Giver of Success & Prosperity)

Nagdevta

Vriksha Devta, Kalp Vriksha

Tulsi

Kalash, Ghat (Pot)

Lotus

Tilak, Dot, Bindu

Swastik (Symbol of All Round Prosperity)

Sudarshan Chakra

Shree Chakra: Shree Yantra

Shree Yantra: Shree Chakra

Vastu Shashtra

Rudraksha

Sacred Thread

Deepak, Jyoti, Flame

Ringing of Bell, Sounds

Wish Fulfilling Cows

Conch Shell, Shankh

Betel Leaf

Coconut, Shriphal, Nariyal

Prelude

durlabham bharte janma

Birth in Bharat (India) is rare.

They are lucky who take birth in Bharat, a land where Gods too crave to be born. Our Vedic civilization was the product of the efforts of divine incarnations like Shree Ramachandra, Yogeshwar Shree Krishna, omniscient Rishis and sages. The Rishis have said that all shall attain Moksh (Salvation) through evolution; with Guru Krupa and soul purification efforts, one can accelerate liberation so, everyone has to make a start towards this process: Initially, one receives emotional inspirations from surroundings and reading: After satisfying the intellectual urges, one can dive deeper into spirituality under the vibrating guidance of a Siddha Guru, who perceives the desciple's consciousness and devotion, not his status.

The word civilization denotes the cumulative spiritual and cultural heritage of a nation or a race in a given era. It reveals the character and conduct of persons and the society of that age. The Westerners had developed by far in materialism. After the visit of Swami Vivekanand, Swami Prabupad, Swami Muktanand, Shree Pandurang Shastri and his Swadhyayee millions, a "sanskrati vistaar" (cultural renaissance) had taken roots. Thus, civilization and culture are complementary like the skin of mango or the peel of orange. Even the fragrance of those celestial fruits is rich and rejoicing. Similarly, intellectual advancement with humility and a dignified living style is the beacon of a progressive civilization.

"tyagenaike amrutatavmanusha"

Through renunciation alone, some have attained immortality. There can be no spiritual strength until an individual renounces worldly materialism. Robots behave like human beings without intelligence whereas even a tiny insect behaves intelligently for self-preservation. Providence has placed human beings highest on the evolutionary scale. Western scientists, thinkers as well as commoners are undergoing a transformation. The knowledge of the basic truths of life will be of use to all persons searching for lasting peace and salvation. The Rishis have charmed and delighted foreigners with clairvoyant visions and perceiving through the cosmos, the minutest, the distant and the hidden mysteries. This volume is an attempt to present the divine principles and attainments of the Rishis. Dependence on legends, myths, miracles has been avoided. The Rishis were true world leaders and teachers in trigonometry, quadratic equations, grammar, phonetics, science, geomancy and the religion called Dharma (Duties).

Preface

> *"giranch gaurim girisham ganesham gurunch geervana gurum grahesham; pranamya pitrorapi padpadma, pravachmi aryan sanskrati lalityam."*
>
> I touch the lotus feet of Gods, Nature, teachers, ancestors for beatitude of this compilation of Aryan culture.

All civilizations have left behind magnificent symbols revealing the supreme heights attained and enjoyed by people living in that era. Distinctive and popular items were chosen as symbols of culture. On seeing a symbolic item, a vivid picture of that country and era emerges in the mind. Symbols of sovereignty and power over the world's temporal and spiritual life — emblems of divine and human sovereignty; a symbol must necessarily suggest more than what it expresses.

From times immemorial, Indians have always drawn inspiration from the soil and environment so, all our cultural symbols are associated with leaves, fruits, flowers, birds, animals, reptiles etc. All auspicious occasions are celebrated with such symbolic items. To ensure adherence, the Rishis associated symbols with the ceremonies as essential ingredients. Our heritage has a rich inventory of attractive and inspiring symbols. Every symbol is pragmatic like a tiny seed which proclaims its potentiality of becoming a blooming tree. A careful look at the symbols opens up a vista of knowledge and reveals the mysteries of nature in the universe. The beauty and pervasiveness manifests itself in our code of conduct in life.

Intellectual discussions were common, but neither force nor compulsion were the basis of dharma as is reflected in 'avibhaktam vibhvateshu; (Unity in diversity). The great Rishis — Valmiki, Vashishtha, Vishwamitra, Gautam, Agastya, Sandilya, Bhardwaj, Patanjali and others propagated "tatva-samanvayat" – respect for all religions and for all words of wisdom without any trace of bitterness of fundamentalism. Despite numerous religious discourses amongst our multi-ethnic populace, we had a pluralistic society, preaching and advocating development and progress to attain sublime heights in thoughts and actions. Sacred symbols can be seen in religious rites where they transpose their meaning to a metaphysical sense. Rites possess an efficacy of their own and serve as a means to desired ends. To see in symbols, the influence it embodies, is like looking beyond the letter of any text to discover its spirit. Adherance to its outward form degenerates into superstition. Many holy symbols are unique, without parallel in shape, size, quality and virtue. Rishis had converted abstracts into systematic melodious sounds and different colours were ascribed to supreme or debased aspirations, emotions and sentiments.

Idols or structures are picturesque depiction of the visions of their artists so they have inherent limitations because they are the creation of imperfect human beings; whereas symbols are mostly products of nature with inherent beauty, fragrance and expressiveness of praise-worthy sentiments. By themselves, they do not generate disputes of caste, colour, or creed. They have universal appeal. Generations of research, experimentation and self-experience with beneficial results enjoyed by the Rishis proclaim that every symbol has miraculous beneficial potency; with proper usage one can

enjoy the blessings but its inverse/perverse use can end up in destruction. Different forms of Gods and Goddesses are not mere imitation of different concepts or thoughts; they are symbols of different virtues and powers. For instance, mythology shows Lord Vishnu sleeping on the cosy bed of Sheshnag's coils for four months, every year. The Gita proclaims that God does not rest even for a blink of the eyes. As such, the restful picture of Lord Vishnu is symbolic of accurate, precise and perfect creation in all functions; that nothing can go wrong even if God goes into deep slumber for months together. Discreet understanding elevates joy in every person. Mathematical explanation of idolic symbols yields sublime appreciation. The Rishis had visualised the omnipotence of gods and goddesses in figurative terms. Brahama is called Chaturanan — four headed to represent four Vedas or four directions East, West, North, South; Lord Shiva is called Trinetra, denoting past, present and future periods of the universe; the four hands of Vishnu symbolise round the clock action to propagate/preserve life; or four objects of life to be attained by every person Dharma (duty), Arth (prosperity), Kama (sex) and Moksh (salvation). Shiva also signifies the Trinity — Sat-Chit-Anand — Truth, Awareness and Bliss. The primordial energy is personified in Ārdh-Nārishwar-a deity half-male and half-female; which is a symbol of unity and harmony which, with the omnipotency of Adishakti, Lord Shiva destroys evils. To express this supernatural might, Adishakti assumes many forms and functions with four or many more hands as demanded by the situation.

Lord Shiva is also depicted as Neel-Kantha (God with blue throat) because He alone agreed to drink the deadly poison obtained from ocean churning. The significance of this depiction is that God did not want human beings to become addicts of drugs/poisons/intoxicants; He retained the deadly poison in His throat to reveal that if addictions go to heart, they become deadly; He does not spit out the poison lest it consumes the universe. To emphasise this aspect, Shiva wears a growing moon and cooling ganges on His head signifying balanced living.

Curiosity about the different forms of Gods & Goddesses has a scientific explanation. Every person is enchanted with a particular charming aspect or concept, so in his ecstasy he starts singing the praise of that form, which in terms of musical notes denotes peculiar waves/vibrations; in Music one can create any shape/form of concerned deity as may be conceived for his cherished desire. Thus, Rishis opened all possible avenues to depict sublimation in life and in living style through cultural symbolism.

"gun kriyanusaren kriyate roop kalpana!"

Idols are conceived in thoughts, then sculptured or cast for impressive reproduction of the virtues visualised in the particular deity. Different colours, armaments, ornaments, decorations and vehicles are used to give depth and meaning, linked with environment, development and progress. Any serious talk about rights is meaningless without the concept of responsibility. Human rights were recognised and respected with developmental efforts and ecology for long term sustainability of a country's resources, the dictum being — "Every right one has, springs only from a duty fulfilled."

Vedant discovers the truths of the inner world and synthesizes them with the sciences of the outer world to present a unified vision of total reality, and to impart to human life and character a depth of faith and vision alongwith breadth of outlook and sympathy. Vedanta does not speak of supernatural revelations. What lies within the sphere of the senses is not the concern of religion because that is the field of the positive sciences.

In recent times in India, it was Swami Vivekanand alone who preached a great message which is not tied to any do's and don'ts. Addressing the nation he said, "In every one of you is the power of God; The God in the poor desires you to serve Him." Kazi Nazrul Islam said, "Vivekanand has washed

away the stain of separateness of religions and castes by proclaiming from the house-tops, the inherent divinity of man.” This respect for what is best in man proceeds to deliver man from bondage to the slavish part of himself.

Today, man finds himself deep in a situation where his past glory is unrecoverable, his present uncertain and his future, an interrogation. In human history, man had never experienced so much darkness within him in the light of all-round enlightenment outside of him; so much inner poverty in the context of measureless enrichment and so much loneliness in the midst of an environing crowd. All these facts indicate that the whole world is in the throes of a spiritual revolution. A Vedic prayer echoed these pangs saying:

> *Asato ma sadgamaya, Tawso ma jyotirgamaya, Mrtyor ma amrutam gamaya*
> “From the unreal lead me to the Real. From darkness lead me to Light. From death lead me to immortality.”

India’s spiritual heritage has thus become dear to the hearts of all men and women in the East and the West. The true glory of men and women is their inborn divine nature — birthless, deathless, pure and holy. The world is seeking for precisely this spiritual growth for man; it is the only means of breaking through the stagnation which has come upon human mind; the only way to creative living and life’s fulfilment.

Invocation

"Om Purnamadah Pumamidham, Purnat Purnmudachuate, Purnasya purnamadaya, Pummevavasisyate. Om Shanti, shanti, shantih!'

The invisible Braham is Full; The visible (world) too is Full. From the Full (Braham) the Full (universe) has come. The Full Braham remains the same, even after the Full (universe) has come out of Full.

This verse is very profound in meaning and significance: It reveals the grasp, sweep and scope of The Whole. Manifestation, not creation is the word of science today. Every step we take in life has fulfilment as its goal; the urge to wholeness as its motive. Man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment.

The achievement of human destiny cannot be left to be worked out by the evolutionary processes of nature. Shall we just float with the current of nature and achieve fulfilment as and when nature achieves it for us? Or shall we take our destiny from the hands of nature into our own hands and achieve it by ourselves? Huxley said, "Man with his intelligence and imagination, has the capacity to direct his evolution and quicken its pace in himself and in his environment."

One curious fact present in the midst of all our joys and sorrows, difficulties and struggles, is that we are journeying towards progressive freedom; true freedom and bliss through the realisation of our real spiritual nature.

Two kinds of persons are happy and free from tensions — either the utter fool or one who has surpassed himself and has become one with God. All others are in varying stages of sorrow and tensions. Such persons are happy with the little pleasures they get in the sense-world; such beams of occasional happiness are their mighty relief in worldly chaos. Remember "the boat should be in the water but water should not be in the boat."

Today, worldliness has overtaken us; we yearn for name and fame as an end in itself. This attitude has retarded our spiritual progress. Remember that to have achieved human birth is also a great thing in the march of evolution. Intense dissatisfaction with the present worldly charms and a keen desire to scale further heights are true marks of moral and spiritual greatness. This realisation can be achieved with a purity of vision and a determined effort to cleanse our thoughts and living styles. Butter is present in milk, but it needs churning to bring it out. So is the truth hidden in sublime experiences.

Aum

The earliest human beings learnt that the source of life is breath. Analysis reveal that inhaling air generates Sh-Sh sound while exhaling is associated with Hm-Hm and that Soham is the keynote of life. Later, it was discovered that different sounds could be uttered in combination with different limbs of the body — the sound O was gutteral, the Sound 'am' touched the palate and was completed at the lips etc. Man danced with glee and discovered that his body was radiating joy which bellowed and sounded Aum and he believed that Aum encompassed his total existence. His inquisitive mind continued to delve deep into the mysteries of nature to ascertain the meaning and potency of different sounds/ utterances/pronunciations. This made him aware of the sounds created by rustling winds, leaves, chirping birds and thundering clouds. Man also observed that different sounds produced specific patterns of waves and vibrations — that sound waves below 30 cycles per second and above 15000 cycles were not clearly audible to human ear. Observing the infinite potencies of the sounds generated in the cosmos due to vibratory atomic energies, the Rishis alloted materialising values to every alphabet. This truth is the basis of Coueism and similar systems of psychotherapy:

> *"aitādhye vākshram Braham, aitādhye vakshram param."*
>
> "AUM is Braham; Whoever knows this reality hidden behind the sound AUM, obtains whatever he desires. Thus nadbrahm became the first symbolic God."
>
> — Kathopanishad.

"A kind of waking — Chaitanya, trance-half-asleep, which 1 have frequently had from boyhood onwards, whenever I have been alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name to myself, silently, till all at once, as if it were out of the intensity of the consciousness my individuality itself, seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, surest and utterly beyond words — where death was an almost laughable impossibility, as if it were the loss of my individual personality

into the true life of myself. It is no nebulous ecstasy, but a state of transcendental wonder associated with absolute clearness of my mind," wrote poet tennyson.

Schlegel, a great Western thinker said, "Even the loftiest philosophy of Europeans, the idealism of reason as set forth by Greek philosophers appears, in comparison with the abundant life and vigour of Oriental idealism, like a feeble Promethean spark against a full flood of Sun light. What distinguishes the Vedant from all other philosophies is that it is a happy blend of religion-cum-philosophy; in India, these two are inseparable."

The potencies of sound and 'Vacha' (human speech), were profoundly investigated in India. The 'Aum' sound vibrating throughout the cosmos has three manifestations or virtues; those of creation, preservation and destruction as written in Taittiriya Upnishad. Each time a person utters any letter or word, he puts into operation, one of these three potencies of Aum. This is the lawful reason behind the exhortation of all the scriptures that man must speak only the truth. The ideal of Satya (truth) has permeated Hindu society. Marco Polo had written that a holy Brahmin will never utter a lie for any thing on earth. As such Brahmins enjoyed Vacha-Siddhi; and could speak with absolute authority and it always came true.

Arnold Mathew said, "Mans body battery is not maintained by eatables alone, but by the vibratory cosmic energy — AUM." This invisible power flows into the human body through the gate of the Medulla Oblongata but originates in the thalamus — the seventh bodily center located in mid-brain called the sahaskar, the last and ultimate location of Kundalini, above the Agya Chakra. The medulla is the primary channel for the body's supply of life force, best known as Pran or Aum. It is directly connected with man's will-power, concentrated in the Sahaskar. Cosmic energy is stored in the brain as the reservoir of infinite potentialities mentioned in the VEDAS as the 1000 petals of the lotus of light. When the authors of the Bible refer to the word 'Amen' or the Holy Ghost, they invariably mean Amen or Aum — the invisible life force which divinely upholds all creations.

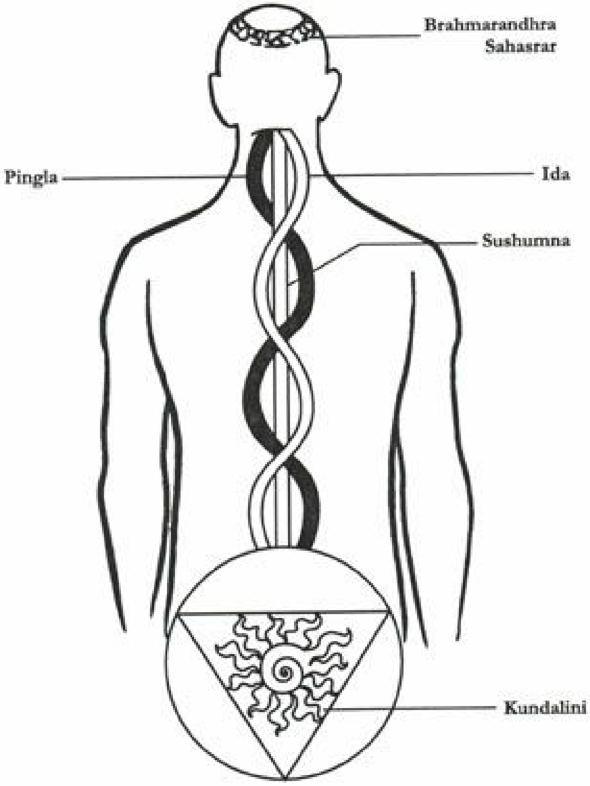
American Indians are known for having developed sound rituals for the rain and wind. Tansen, the great Indian singer in Akbar's court had lit up all the candles in the Darbar-Hall by singing the Deepak Rag; and his beloved Tani had quenched the flames which had engulfed sangeet samrat Tansen, with Rag-Megh-Mallahar. The miracles of sound- modern-television and radio are instrumental versions of catching and transmitting sound waves, but they lack the potency of materialising, enjoyed by Rishis. A very suggestive illustration to explain this phenomena is that after tuning a stringed instrument to a particular pitch, strike the corresponding note on a piano and you will notice that whenever this particular note is sounded on the piano it creates a corresponding vibration in the stringed instrument even when it may be placed at a distance from the piano.

Pranayam
Cosmic Energy Control

Pranayam is normally understood as the science of breath. The correct literal meaning of this Sanskrit word is — Prān = Energy; Āyamā = manifestation or control. Prān is the vital energy in the Universe and all living beings enjoy it throughout their lifetime. Just as an iron piece becomes a magnet when passed through electricity, similarly, the universe is vibrating with pran-vayu and mother nature generously gives it to all those who can draw upon it in full measure of their capacity.

Generally, people confuse pran with oxygen and normally, they draw in only around 20% of their lung capacity because of ignorance of the science and technique of correct and efficient breathing. A normal person breathes upto fifteen times in a minute, whereas yogis can remain breathless for as long as they choose or decide — an interesting paradox! Our Rishis had learnt and mastered the secret, however modern doctors and scientists are perplexed with the phenomena.

According to ancient Yoga Shastras, the pran is classified under five major heads — Pran, Udan, Saman, Apan, and Yyana: With a happy and harmonious blend, these five classifications are cumulatively denoted by the single word — pran; and its governing body is breath. Rishi Patanjali has written the magnificent Yoga-Sutra to clearly define and detail the science and control of breath. To understand it better, one must have a clear knowledge of the nature and functioning of the nervous system; basically it is the regulation of inhalation and exhalation of breath combined with retention power.



By regulating the functioning of the lungs, one acquires control over the heart and various nerves. This is accomplished by controlling the pause between inhalation and exhalation. The autonomic nervous system regulates processes in our body such as secretions by the digestive organs, the heart beat etc. but with Pranayama, voluntary control over the autonomic nerves can be largely achieved and modulated. It is for this reason that control of breath constitutes the starting point for controlling the autonomic nervous system; A determined effort holds the key. Detailed knowledge and perseverance is needed to learn all about the finer forces of life instead of rhetorics about the intake of oxygen and exhalation of carbon dioxide, because Pran flows throughout the body, through thousands of channels called nadies.

Animals have simple openings or holes through which the air enters their nasal cavity; only human beings are gifted by nature with a mysterious and complex nose with two distinct divisions called nostrilles, which are divided by a septum.

Breath for health and enlightenment: The science of breathing has been studied very minutely by the yogis. They have gone far to find out the different breathing exercises suitable for the success and right enjoyment of all human activities. Breathe in deeply, exercising the entire power of the lungs, and without making any sound. Then, without holding the breath, exhale as gently and slowly as when the breath was taken in, maintaining the same rhythm.

Rhythm has a good deal to do with the welfare and advancement of our physical, emotional, and spiritual life. Anything done in rhythm has a soothing and restful effect on the body-system whereas breaking the rhythm at once creates chaos and confusion in the system. For this reason, the metronome of breathing should not be disturbed. By breathing deeply and rhythmically we can get rid of many physical and mental disturbances.

The following exercise has been praised by the yogis as one which brings great attractiveness of personality, a spirit of universal friendliness, cheerfulness of disposition, physical beauty, sweetness of voice and longevity. This exercise is very simple and can be done at any time, any where.

Put your lips in the position of whistling. Then draw in the breath slowly, to the full extent of your

lung capacity. Close your lips, swallow and then gradually exhale through both the nostrils, keeping the mouth closed. This exercise can be done as many times during the day as it suits you. When you are out in the open, it is of great benefit. It also gives you the power of keeping your spirit above depression, dejection, sorrow, discouragement and complexes of all kinds inclusive of anxieties.

Once the fundamental principles is grasped one can adjust oneself according to the environment one finds oneself in. In general, the most vital and beneficial exercise of breathing is to make your breathing deep and rhythmical. When this gets accomplished, concentration as well as meditation will also become very simple and easy and your progress, smooth. Remember that the object is not to be able to breathe in different modes/ways, but to be able to calm the mind and the body so that they do not interfere with your main objectives.

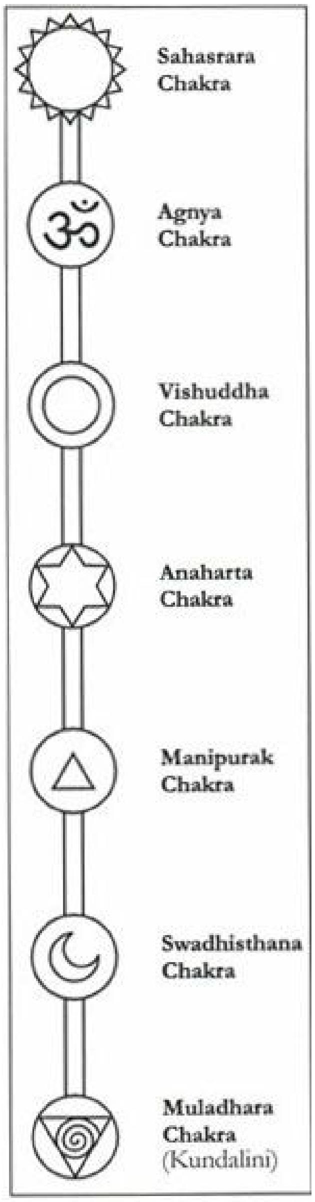
The distinction between breathing through the right and left nostril was deeply studied by the Rishis and they discovered that the flow of air through the right nostril gears the internal organs towards more active physiological processes. Drinking water is a passive kind of intake and this conclusive study gave birth to Swara-Yoga — the process and methodology of uttering/making sound with correct pronunciation/ punctuation. Breathing through the right side made a person more active and alert; breathing through the left side produces a quieter, more passive psychological state, so the Rishis considered the side through which the air was flowing in and out to be extremely important for all their activities. This study provided the basis for mental, emotional and physiological preparation for any activity. Thus the functioning and utility of two important nadies was revealed.

Later it was discovered that besides Pingla (Sun Nadi) which flows through the right nostril, and Ida (Moon-Nadi) which flows through the left nostril, there exists a middle passage which was named Sushumna and which passes through the junctions of the Pingla and Ida nadies, and which was of prime importance for meditation. All these three major nadies originate at the base of the spine and travel upwards along the spinal canal and terminate in the Sahsrar (Thalamus) corresponding to the ventricular cavity of the physical body.

The junctions of these three nadies, along with the spinal canal are called Chakras or wheels; Just as the spokes of a wheel radiate outward from the hub, so do these three nadies from the chakras to other parts of body. There are seven principal chakras as illustrated below, uniting the Sahasrar. Scientists have not yet succeeded in identifying these three basic nadies which are the core of Pranayama. Yoga anatomy and physiology is very clear and accurate for those who systematically practice and study the science of breath and yoga.

Pranayam devitalises the Ida and Pingla, but at the same time it opens up the Sushumna nadi, thus allowing the cosmic energy to flow through this channel freely. The Yogi then experiences great bliss and is freed from the bondage of time,
space and causations. He becomes one with God and attains freedom from the cycles of birth and death.

Divine feats are required against incurable diseases or insoluble human problems. The masters who have become one with Him exercise miraculous powers solely for the good of humanity or other living entities. ALL great ones become NOT VIRTUOUS BUT VIRTUE — this is the sole purpose of creation by God. The Rishis had discovered this energy source pervading in the cosmos and developed the Pranayama technique called Kundalini, to harness it. Those who succeed in arousing the Kundalini acquire the. powers of becoming omniscient and omnipotent.



No event, rare or phenomenal is without law or beyond law. Self- realised sages can perform miracles because they understand the subtle laws of creation; — that each one approaches God in his own way just as two grains of sand are not alike.

Yoga Vidya is a codified system. It has eight phases for self- realisation. They are — Yama, Niyam, Asana, Pranayam, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

King Janak led the life of a perfect saint despite being a good householder. No worldly person can reveal all karma — deeds of previous births. The Hindu scriptures exhort devotees that total mergence with God must be the goal. The incidental mastery of miraculous powers, if used for worldly purposes, delay a man's advancement indefinitely; God does not reveal himself to a seeker who is satisfied with lesser attainments. The iron bits of karma — worldly activities get attracted only when a magnet of personal ego exists and remains attached. Just as worldly wise persons delusively consider health and wealth to be their goal in life, similarly, it becomes possible for a devotee, who might have attained some success and spiritual progress, to become infatuated with the gifts or powers which accompany the attainment of a higher yogic stage called Siddhi. However, that stage becomes his downfall until he reverts to a holy and pious life which includes penance. The only exception to this rule is a yogi who has attained and established himself in the Infinite Consciousness, his actions and miracles are for benevolence so they do not become karma, because he then becomes an instrument like Arjuna, to perform the divine wish — Nimitta matram bahava sabya sachi — "Oh Arjuna become an instrument only" Just as the postman delivers letters containing good or bad news

to the addresses, is only a carrier in the system.

Some European and Arab saints have also attained these sublime heights.

Ordinary folk like Gora Kumbhar — a simple but Karma Yogi potter of India (Maharashtra) had the courage to tell saint Namdeva that he was immature in Yoga even when Namdeva had established kinship with Yogeshwar Shree Krishna, similar to His classmate Sudama; Saint Namdeva instantaneously realised his short coming, approached his Guru to lead him on royal path of yoga and attained salvation.

Jainism and Buddhism also attracted the attention of noble souls for developing calm and cool insights. Bhagwan Mahavir and Bhagwan Buddha basically preached sublimation by emphasising moral behaviour in all dealings, tolerance and kindness for all living beings, evolution of soul and ultimate salvation.

For purification of body and mind, Mahavir Swami taught Ahinsa. The principle of live and let live was advocated to all followers upto its legitimate conclusion of tolerance, and the developement of kindness and love for all living beings Santhara. For keeping the body and mind cool, the initial stage or practice was called Athaiyan' which meant that the devotee must first cleanse the body of worldly passions; This Vrat used to be observed for upto 28 days in a year during which period the devotee voluntarily gave up eating all meals and survived only on sipping warm water along with the continuous inner recitations of prayer. In the most advanced stage, this practice was called Santhara, wherein the devotee voluntarily deprived himself of total sustenance and embraced death in full consciousness.

Bhagwan Buddha had evolved a simpler system of Pranayam, which got bifurcated into two distinct styles, but in reality, both of them were two sides of the same coin. Both systems were called separate kinds of meditation, Samtha and *Vipassyana,* the former being a 'calming' practice, and the latter being an insight practice. There are two forms of Samtha meditation which are complimentory to each other: One is called 'mindfulness of breathing' — Anapanasati; the other, Meta-Bhavna or development of loving kindness. Both practices emphasise learning to give full/complete attention to what one is doing in daily behaviour. What is 'claimed' in persuing/either practices, is the elimination Klesha or Dukkha — the agitations of egocentric ideas.

Vipassyana can be persued in daily life by everyone. The basis is balanced concentration and control of one's breathing system + moun (absolute non-speaking) or the avoidance of avoidable speaking, enabling a person to have a cool mind to think and persue sublimation in all walks of life; an instrument of transformation, or the means of a change of being. This system is preached and taught by Shri S. Goenka and his enlightened lieutenants at his Ashram located at Igatpuri, in Maharashtra (India) or at their camps called, *Shivirs.*

Sanskrit

If the Vedic theory of antiquity of civilized man on this planet is correct, it becomes possible to explain why the world's most ancient tongue — Sanskrit is also the most perfect. Sir William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society has said, "The Sanskrit language, whatever be the antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either of these two languages." Walter Eugene Clark writes about Rishi Panini: "His grammar is the earliest scientific grammar in the world, the earliest compilation of grammar of any language, and one of the greatest ever written." The legacy of India; Oxford University Press, 1937.

"It was the discovery of Sanskrit by Western writers, at the end of eighteenth century that revolutionised Western study of languages and grammar, and gave rise to our science of comparative philology, but long before that, Panini, who names over 60 predecessors, the sounds represented by the letters of the alphabet had been arranged in an orderly systematic form.... Indian study of languages was as objective as the dissection of human body by an anatomist." The antiquity of Indian civilization is a subject which the modern scholars are finding full of ethnological interest. According to the Richas (verses), in the Vedas, very clear indications are mentioned that BharatVarsha — India had always been the home of the Aryans. Nothing in Hindu literature or tradition tends to substantiate the writings of Western historians that early Aryans had invaded India from some other parts of Asia or Europe and settled down here. The internal evidence of the Vedas which bears on these ethnological points has been presented in an unusual and very readable volume — Rig Vedic India, by Sjt. Abinash Chandra Das of Calcutta University, 1921. Professor Das claims that emigrants from India had settled in various parts of Asia and Europe, spreading Sanskrit and Aryan culture and folk lore. For instance, Lithuanians who do not own any great collection of formal literature of their own, do possess a Sanskrit based tongue which is similar to Sanskrit. Lithuanians can understand scholars who speak in Sanskrit. Philosopher Kant, who did not know Sanskrit at all, was amazed at the scientific structure of the Lithuanian language. He maintained, "It possesses the key which will open all the enigmas, not only of philology but also of history." The modern computer scientists have acclaimed Sanskrit alphabet and figures to be universally adaptable for computers.

True, the Vedas were memorised, but it does not mean that writing was unknown to our great ancestors. God Brahma himself had revealed the Brahmi language script, which is said to be the mother of Sanskrit and thus Sanskrit is acknowledged by scholars to be the most perfect language, with its own script. However, the Vedas were not entrusted to be written on paper, parched leaves or stone because all these materials are open to obliteration due to climatic conditions, and the ravages of time. The scriptures have persisted down the ages because our Rishis understood the superiority of mind over matter as the proper means for permanent transmittal. Mind is the most wondrous computer, if modern computers can have vast, memory, the human mind is certainly its master.

I-Tsing, the Chinese scholar who had visited India in the 17th century has written, "The four vedas containing about 100,000 verses, have been handed down from mouth to mouth, not transcribed on paper or leaves. In every generation there existed bright and intelligent Brahmins who could recite those verses verbatim. The unique fact is that in Sanskrit recitations, the second or subsequent line

automatically flows down in memory, otherwise the first or single line recitations loose sense or meaning."

In Sanskrit, each character carries a fixed and invariable pronunciation. George Bernard Shaw has written a wise and witty essay on the phonetic inadequacy of the Latin based English alphabet, in which the twenty six letters struggle unnecessarily to bear the burden of sound. With his customary ruthlessness, Mr. Shaw had urged a new alphabet of forty two characters. — Wilson's The Miraculous Birth of Languages.

Hand made paper from specially treated woods were used for writing. Nearchus, Alexander's admiral in 4th century B.C. has written that Hindus wrote on fine tissues which were closely woven. The recent discovery of seals in the Indus Valley is leading several scholars to abandon the current theory that India had borrowed Sanskrit alphabet from Semitic sources. All these unassailable facts and evidences establish the superiority of our cultural heritage. Sanskrit is the one common national inheritance of India. The South and North, the West and East have contributed equally to it. No part of India can claim its exclusive possession. When we talk of our national genius being unity in diversity, of the fundamental oneness of the Indian mind etc. what we really mean is the dominance of Sanskrit, which over-rides the regional differences and linguistic peculiarities and achieves a true national character in our thoughts and emotions and gives form and shape to languages. The basic reason for the wide acceptance of Sanskrit by all the Rishis and Seers is that they had ascribed spiritual power/energy to each alphabet, which when uttered as prescribed, materialised in fulfilling the seeker's urge for blessings.

Guru is not God but God is Guru because He leads the disciple from darkness to light. God encompasses both light and darkness; He is formless, and omnipotent. Guru is a pint of water from an ocean called God. Ideal Guru-Sishya parampara should be of friendship and the student should feel free to question his teacher: Both should be united by mutual affection and respect — a relationship transcending the physical, mental, emotional and intellectual involvment. Such capacity can weather any storm.

Sage Sanskriti prayed to the Sun God: 'Oh Lord, please teach me the supreme knowledge.' Sun God said, "I shall be happy to explain this rare knowledge, upon the attainment of which you will become free while yet dwelling in this body: See in all beings the Brahma who is one, unborn, imperishable, infinite, and conscious, so seeing, live in peace and bliss. Do not see anything except the self and the supreme. This state is called samadhi yoga: Rooted thus in yoga, carry on your deeds. The mind of one who is thus rooted in yoga gradually withdraws from all desires, and the seeker feels blissful while engaging himself each day in meritorious acts; He has no interest in contrary efforts of the ignorant. He never betrays the secrets of one to another and he occupies himself only with pious deeds without disturbing others. He fears sin and does not crave any self indulgence. He lives in the company of enlightened persons and studies scriptures."

'Continuing, Sun God said, "I keep myself in good health every day. Every morning I look radiant and eager to give joy and enthusiasm to all who join me in performing their duties with full faith, efficiently: Every evening while returning home, I am again radiant and beaming with joy for having completed my rounds, thus I appear rosy with satisfaction." Only in India there is a long dawn with rosy sky and again a rosy evening, and a long Goraj period. Thus every living being must remain joyous and cheerful.

On full moon day — Poornima, the nature of the moon can affect the mind: The mind controls all senses. The unity of body and mind-spirit is affected by light. When sunlight or moonlight (rays of sun or moon) enter the body all 24 physical features become active because the moon also depends on the sun for light: Thus Poornima acquires great significance so, sun is guru and sunlight is true knowledge which dispels ignorance. The rays of the sun and moon activate all energy chakras from bottom to top — Mooladhar Chakra upto Sahasrar — the thalamus or Kapal.

When you explore the world within, you will be astonished to find this truth within yourself. We are prevented from experiencing this reality because of our worldly wisdoms. The day one real shishya (disciple) embarks on this inward journey he shall be aware of the real master within himself — the inner Sun who is a thousand times brighter than the external one. When you seek the divine, you will begin to enjoy its presence.

The worldly schools are "No-knowledge" factories where teaching and learning by rote has become the norm. There are three types of worldly teachers: (1) You learn from people you meet in life; (2) You learn from worldly experiences and relationships and (3) Guru, the real teacher who takes the disciples back to godhood by removing their ignorance. Since you are the centre of your universe, better tune yourself to the harmonious music within and strike the right chords to achieve eternal

harmony. The Guru will facilitate the linking of the individual computers to the master computer through the 'innernet'. This becomes easy once you arouse yourself to become more/really aware and receptive to the divine truth. Awaken the virtues of wakefulness which you possess in full measure and you will become a beaming sun yourself; You will soon become luminous, capable of showing light to others. Mahatma Gandhi used to say, "When I admire the wonder of sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances if they did not help me to think of Him — including the body." "Life is greater than all art forms. I would go further and declare that the man whose life comes nearest to perfection is the greatest artist, for what is art without the sure foundation from framework of a noble life? True art can only be expressed through the delicate living touch of the hands of men and women — not through inanimate power driven machines of mass production — True art takes note, not merely of form but also of what lies beneath. Purity in life is the highest and truest art. The art of producing good music from cultivated voice can be achieved by many, but the art of producing that music from the harmony of pure life is very rare."

"The distinguishing feature of modern civilization is the infinite multiplicity of human wants. The characteristic of Rishi culture is an imperative restriction upon and a strict regulating of these multiplying wants. Today's insatiable demands arise from want of a living faith in divinity."

.

"tapasvibhyodhiko yogi, gyānibhyopi matōdhika:

Karmibhyāschadhiko yogi tasmādyogi bhavārjuna:"

Shree Krishna implores Arjun to become a true Yogi saying that a Yogi is superior to ascetics, superior to men of knowledge, he is also superior to ritualists. The Sanskrit word Yogi means one who is joined to God.

It is the duty of every person to choose an ideal for his life lest he drifts and deviates into purposeless existence. An ideal ceases to be an ideal when achieved, therefore, the higher the ideal the harder it becomes to achieve it; even so, one must fix an attainable ideal. The path that leads to ideals is that of a yogi who consciously and deliberately progresses towards divinity which is the purpose of Creation. With yogic advance, his mind gets purified and he becomes a Siddha saint.

An ascetic is one who undergoes voluntary sacrifices in order to obtain celestial powers. What is the good of mere book reading? The learned may at best be adept in aptly quoting from scriptures. However, lifelong repeating and reciting them brings no real change or sublimation in life. What is written in the scriptures must be practiced regularly for spiritual progress; mere scriptural knowledge is of little use to worldly wise men or women. All those who practice meditation, concentration and purification of their mind and bodily senses are real Yogis. There is no higher state than this because every thing that they undertake is a worship of God — "satatam yogi."

To explain in worldly terms, those who may have long hair, and a flourishing beard, and wear saffron or white robes do not become Yogis. The Rishis had ordained that one must remember God in every moment of his existence. In Maharashtra (India) a potter (Gora Kumbhar), used to make pots with such great devotion that the sound of AUM used to emanate from his pots as well. Every morning one brushes teeth, washes mouth not only to eat delicious dishes but to keep his mouth clean because the God sitting in his heart, speaks through his mouth. The Rishis have said that only the man who is more competent, more enlightened and more devoted to righteousness, attains success and rises above his contemporaries in this world.

The phrase "Live and let live" is wrongly used. Generally speaking, it means all must enjoy the right to live. The Rishis differentiated and clarified it to mean that if all assert to live then the world will collapse due to chaos because it is against the scheme of nature. The bigger fish eat the smaller ones; the mother snake eats up its progeney soon after their birth; a tiger instinctively kills its prey, but human beings are blessed by God to discriminate between good and bad, worthy and unworthy. The Rishis emphasised that man must help man and cooperate for progress instead of wasting time and energy in gossip, bitterness, acrimony, hatred or enemosity; better encourage brotherhood and guide

the willing persons to become Yogis.

Maun — Silence!

Rishis affirmed that silence is synonymous with bliss. Whether one is visiting an isolated temple on a hilltop or at the Samadhi of any adorable saint, one gets a feeling of peace and harmony from the environment/atunement.

Silence is of three varieties. One is the silence of external type which we know as that of a grave yard or of a cremation ground. This silence is worshipped by Tantriks or those who learn/practice black magic or other para-normal purposes. The second variety of external silence is what we temporarily experience during sleep or in some lonely place away from the hustle-bustle of bazara, factories making whirlling or buzzing sounds or by speeding vehicles.

The third most adorable silence is internal silence which is difficult to achieve/attain. The silence within stills the mind by shutting out desire, frustration, or attachment to material objects. Such sweet silence comes with the emptying of trash from the mind/thoughts etc.

Silence is expected to combine the ecstasy of being and nonbeing Such silence is above moral and intellectual existence. Silence, whatever its nature, is power. The British poet Longfellow recognised the healing/soothing power of silence. Let us then labour for inward stillness — inward stillness and healing — that perfect silence where the lips and heart are quiet and we no longer entertain our thoughts and vain opinions/arguments.

Silence of mind is what sleep is for the body. Silence cures all afflictions caused by stress and strain, tensions troubles, anxiety and confusion or mental conflicts. Silence clears the cobwebs. Saint Vasvani has written that silence purifies as also vitalises us; thus silence is the best tranquillizer one can have in the modern noisy world. According to Vasvaniji, when one sits in silence, the circles of positive energy get formed: When you sit silent you are surrounded by rings of positive energy healing the body + your mind. This positive energy works miraculously when the external and internal silence merge, then mysteries of self evolution are revealed and you witness the divine!

Mahatma Gandhi, Vinobaji and almost every elevated saint observed regularity in remaining silent for certain hours every day or periodically. Thus one succeeds in developing communion with ones deity; the soul gets linked with God. The Bhagwad Gita maintains "self-realisation is felt in the silence of your soul." Thus, silence is not mere absence of noise; it is the activation of your energies.

Mother nature provides a protective armour of energy around the body of all objects — buildings, plants, animals, human beings etc. This is their aura. The pictures of Gods, siddha saints have a radiating circle of aura around their faces. The aura beams keep changing in their radiation intensity and hue with every subtle change in thoughts, emotions or passions. The aura of saintly persons remains bright white, signifying peace, tranquility and affection. This reflection becomes visible through facial expressions. Such souls have a smiling, blissful face. The warriors or persons burning with rage have red faces. One can alter his/her aura as required by the situation; so long as one is alive.

American scientist Dr. Richard Green had dissected the brains of some persons and found that dismembering of some portions of brain had decreased the intensity of their desires but not motivated or obliterated them completely; This face proved that the energy manifestation was under the control and guidance of some super-natural elements. The Sankhya Yoga system of mental modifications and characteristics of Buddhi or intellect, Ahankar-egoism and sense consciousness are subjects of deep interest for every seeker. Rishi Kanad known as atom eater was the great discoverer of atomic individuality which became known as Vaisesika science. Some relevant portions of Vaisesika are being deeply studied.

Russian scientist Dr. Davidowich Kirliyan had developed a camera to take pictures of human aura: He took pictures of the patients and noticed disturbances in their aura. In fresh dead bodies his camera showed the aura leaving and hovering over the dead body: The aura kept diminishing and finally disappeared totally after the third day of death. This revelation confirmed the scientific basis of disposal of dead bodies by cremation, lest the powerful aura of the dead person causes undesired disturbance at the home or grave-yard.

Rishi Charak and Rishi Sushruta have written and described in their medicinal volumes that every person has upto 1,000 energy points in the body. This truth has been proved by Russian Scientist Dr. Grechko Edramechow who has developed a machine fitted with photo-sensitive electric bulbs. As soon as a person stands on the machine, the photogenic bulbs start glowing nearest to the energy points in the body of that person. A hospital has been established at Vancouver and another in California, U.S.A. to treat the patients and teach them how to regulate and develop their aura for their spiritual upliftment and management of their emotions/passions.

Rishi Patanjali Yoga-Sutra describes such metaphysical achievements as Anima Siddhi — extra sensory perception or micro-PSI in science. In general terminology the same phenomena is called the human aura. Scientists have probed this phenomena and have established that aura can be changed. This discovery also proved that every atom and every molecule in nature is a continuous broadcasting station. Thus, even after death, the substance that was in some living form continues to emit its delicate rays. The wave length of these rays range from shorter than anything to the longest kind of radio frequencies. The jumble of these rays is still an inconceivable enigma for the modern scientist: A single molecule may radiate one million different wave lengths at the same time. The basic difference is that radio transmitted waves get lost into oblivion but light rays keep remitting and

emitting the message for countless years like an echo, so scientists are endeavouring to capture the commands of Napoleon: If and when they succeed, it shall become easy to hear and compile the lost Vedas and other literary treasures of the world.

God Shiva could see all this with His eye; Rishis and Yogis made forecasts by energising their Agya-Chakra, their broadcasting apparatus of thoughts. When any feeling or thought is imprinted deeply in the heart, it acts as a mental radio and by telepathy, the thoughts of one person gets transmitted to another through the subtle vibrations of ether in the cosmos. Thereafter, they come through a grosser earthly ether creating electrical waves, which in turn, translate into matter or the desired results.

For enlightenment and spiritual progress, the Rishis have laid down moral codes for purity of thoughts and actions. These are indispensable disciplines for spiritual explorations and investigations. Modern Western psychology concerns itself with the subconscious mind and with mental diseases through psychoanalysis. During the last one thousand years, many enlightened and self realised saints have visited Western countries several times. Some have established their Ashrams and have gathered large followings there so, in the near future, we can hope for a true and genuine revival of oriental wisdom.

Saints of all religions recommend that human beings must remain for as long as possible, within the orbit of positive energy currents, so they made it obligatory for disciples to remain in the vicinity, preferably within the campus of a temple, church, gurudwara, mosque, stupa or pagoda etc. These holy abodes have the electrical potentiality of seventy mili-volts corresponding to 11000 Bovis + +. Some prominent Hindu temples have almost the whole township inhabiting the campus. The Vatican is another good example. Pious souls visiting such places experience the bliss of these positive vibrations/currents. Hindu devotees take many rounds of their deity's sanctorum and thus they remain within the energy orbit for longer time. There is no limit for progress and attainments in spirituality for right followers.

On 4th May 1977 Cosmonaut Edgar Michael — pilot of the Apollo 14 spacecraft had given a talk at Hotel Taj Mahal, in Mumbai on "Yoga and its potentiality to reveal metaphysical truths." He had said that by using telepathy, he had sent messages on earth to some of his near and dear ones which had been received accurately by them. On his return to earth, he established the Institute of Nautical & Theological Sciences. He revealed that Russia is by far advanced and ahead of USA in metaphysics. Three books — Psychic Warfare; The Mind Race and Mind Wars are published in USA on this subject. He said that USA is spending over 10 million dollars on research. In Columbia 500 students are learning Pranayam daily.

Mantra Tantra Yantra

India's spiritual and cultural heritage is equally close to the hearts of men and women all over the world because Indian Vedant emphasises man's development of total excellence. India has climbed the heights of great experience. Rishis tackled life as a whole from all aspects and gave a clarion call:

> *"Uttisthat jagrut prapya varānnibodhat"*
>
> "Arise, awake and enlighten yourself by approaching learned souls."

The first actual contact and interaction of human beings must have been with Light, Darkness, Heat, Sound, Wind & Water. Amongst these, elements sound and light gave maximum happiness in life. The Mantra is a potent chant, a vibratory utterance in praise of the deity; The Tantra is the process/procedure of attaining the fruits of Puja or worship or Sadhana; and the Yantra is a sketch (Akruti) as visualised by the devotee of his deity for the purpose in his mind. The Literal translation of Mantra, Tantra and Yantra is instruments of thought, signifying the ideal inaudible sounds which represent the desired aspects of creation when vocalised as syllables. Mantra-Tantra-Yantra constitute universal terminologies such as the infinite powers of sound derived from AUM. Folk lores of all nations contain references to incantations and their power over nature.

The root of the word Yantra is 'Yam' which means to retain. An accurately prepared and properly propitiated yantra retains the energy and potency of the propitiated deity, just as a soul is encased in a human body or the flame of a wick is encased in wax (candle). Similarly, yantra has the potency of the wick of the deity. In occult science triangles, having an apex on top and also at the bottom are drawn. The pinnacle of the apex triangles represent fire, Shiva or male formation; The downward apex triangles represent water, and nature gravitational energy. The starting point of creation is the conjunction and union of such triangles. A circle represents wind or space, full, complete or zero.

A yantra is the radiating beam and power of its deity. Rishis said that every human body is a miniature form of the universe consisting of energy power, glow, or darkness in specific proportions, with an in-built capacity of vibrations, sound and heat.

A mere loud utterance is no mantra-tantra. The chant must be inspired from within to yield the desired result. The heart and soul of the devotee should become one with the deity wherein he loses his/her identity and merges with the deity:

> *"uchāryamanā ye mantrā na mantrāshchapi tā bindu: audo bhagwān shabda rāshi: sarve varna shivātmakā."*
>
> "Correctly uttered words have the effect of being Mantra; whatever is not uttered like a Mantra is zero because every alphabet/word represents deity — Shiva."

All alphabets are descriptive of the worshipped deity. In the chant, many words of different alphabets reveal the cumulative potency of the concerned deity. Initially, the chant remains confined to the praise of the deity, but with the blessings of a Siddha Guru, the devotee can identify with the deity. The ultimate oneness of the mantra-deity-devotee is the successful, fruitful performance, the secret of success. In each breath inhaling and exhaling, the sound of Aum should be blended: The devotee should enjoy the melody of the chant in every breath.

The great Rishi Bhrigu had compiled a large volume of mantras in the Bhrigu-Sanhita, detailing the ups and downs in the life of every human being and forecasting their destiny, diseases, companionships, remedies etc. The Sanhita was written in coded language just as Nostradamus has written his prophesies about all world events in the times to come. The mystry lies in the fact that the original script has many different key-notes called Seed-Mantras. Just as a gardener cannot claim that every seed sown by him will sprout despite his best attention and care, similarly, every pundit or worshipper cannot claim that his version will come true or materialise. The surest thing is to have full confidence and faith in one's own self: Learn the skill from an enlightened Guru and do the performance under his auspicious guidance for positive results.

In 1919, the discovery of the radio microscope had revealed a new world of unknown Sun rays. This instrument could see and show, man himself, as well as all kinds of inert matter and constantly emitting electrical rays. Those who believed in telepathy, second sight and clairvoyance or occult science, found scientific proof of the existence of invisible rays which travel from person to person or matter to matter. The radio is a frequency spectroscope. It does the same thing for cool, non-glowing matter that the spectroscope does when it discloses the kind of atom that make up the stars. With the discovery of the Top Quark at the Fermy Labs. USA, physicists probing matter felt they had found the ultimate building block of the universe. Scientists agree that clairvoyants may have seen this quark before the dawn of the nuclear era.

Dr. Annie Besant, Madam Blavatski, and C.W. Leadbeater had described the minutest details of an atom in their publication — Occult Chemistry. Both these great souls had acknowledged that they were trained by their Eastern Gurus to develop psychic powers so that they could enter an altered state of minute consciousness in which dynamic mental images of minute objects such as atoms could be magnified. Swami Muktanand was contacted by Neil Armstrong, the first cosmonaut to land on the moon, to describe all that he had seen on moon's surface; Swami Muktanand went into a trance and after a little while revealed that during his transcendental meditation he had mentally visited the planet moon, and he vividly described all that the cosmonaut had seen there.

Rishi Patanjali's Yog Sutra describes such achievements as — Anima Siddhi — extra sensory perception or Micro-PSI in science. In general terminology, the same phenomena is called human aura or the existence and emission of such rays by all living beings in differing degrees. Scientists have probed the phenomena and have established that human aura can be changed by experts or masters. In the USA there are two hospitals in California, and one in Vancouver, where diseases are treated by aura changes of the patient.

The great sages of India had expounded that the mind takes four forms, each with a different function. When the mind is filled with thoughts it is called Manas; When it contemplates, it is called Chitta; When it makes decisions it is called Buddhi or intellect, and when it takes on the feeling of "I"-ness, it

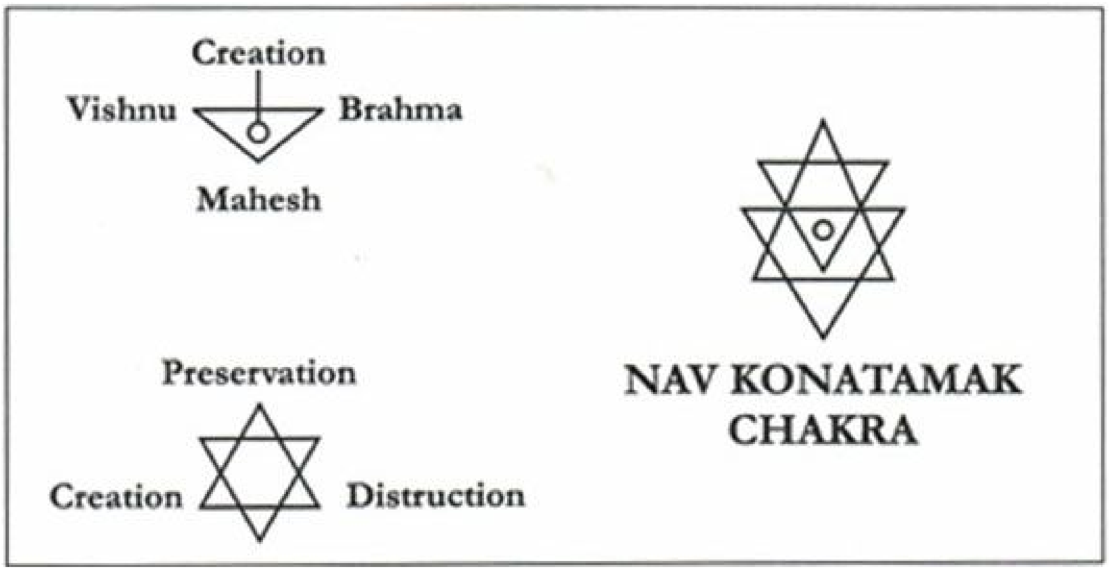
is called Ahankar-ego. Together these four functions are called the Antahkarna, or the inner psychic instrument.

Human aura is dynamic energy which changes with the mood and behaviour of every individual and indicates higher spiritual position at any given time. Human organism radiates psychic energy — a field of super-sensitivity surrounding the body. Tarun Puri runs celestial Dimensions Enterprises in Vancouver, Canada. And also holds workshops on energy awareness.

A branch of modern science — geobiology has much to reveal about the formidable knowledge known as Geomancy. Dr. E. Hartmann, a German physicist has developed an instrument to identify a grid of energy lines emanating from the earth's surface and circumspecting the globe. A few important diagrams of chakras/yantras are appended with brief explanatory notes. Proper and accurate yantras can be prepared by an expert and a specialist with the blessings of a Siddha Saint.

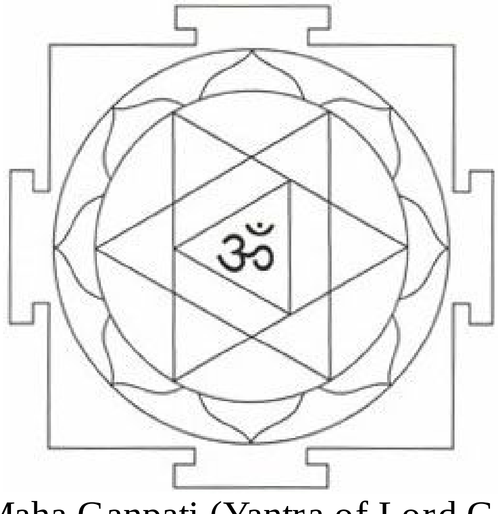
1. Combination of point (Bindu) and a triangle indicate Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and creation as focalpoint.

2. A hexagonal-2 triangles overlapping each other indicate Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Surya (Sun), Ganesh and Durga (Shakti). It is a combination of Shiva + Shakti. The upward apex indicates Purush the downward apex indicates Stree (female).



3. Represent Nav-Grahas prominent planets revolving on their own axis in the Solar System.

4. Shree Maha Ganpati Yantra. A properly drawn and sanctified Yantra, if worshipped daily by a pious devotee it can fulfill all pious wishes.



Shri Maha Ganpati (Yantra of Lord Ganesh)

5. Shree Durga Maha Yantra. For invoking Aadi-Shakti for every success, victory and prosperity.
6. Shree Sudarshan Chakra. This Chakra is the invincible weapon of Vishnu and Shree Krishna with miraculous powers of remote control of operation and a safe return after accomplishing assigned task.
7. Shree Chakra or Shree Yantra. Yantra to propitiate Goddess of Wealth. A detailed note about Sudarshan Chakra and Shree Chakra is dealt with in a separate chapter.

This is a special Durga Yantra indicating the Union of Shiva by Apex upwards showing the Purush and Shakti with 2 triangles with downward apex showing the Female Shakti with the focal point and Aum

Specimen of a few Chakra — Diagrams are appended. These are mere sketches; The properly drawn Chakra must have inscribed or written alphabet, the name, designation and praise of the concerned deity. Then the yantra is sanctified by a Siddha Saint who charges the potency in the yantra with correct and clear pronunciations and recitations/hymns. The Rishis had observed that different sounds generated different reactions in differing situations/circumstances. They also found that every human being has his/her individual melody and expression and each one can attain solicited virtue by his/her own personal effort and practice. They also noticed that mechanical sound did not stir up the vibrations as required. This gave birth to develop musical instruments with strings and wires so that the ringing sound could echo the desired notes, strains and appeals. For war-like preparations Nagaras, Damdamas, Bheri, Damru, Turhi, Conch Shell etc. were used. For appealing music, the Bansuree, Flute, Veena, Sitar, Sarangi, Santoor, Ektara, etc. came in vogue.

For worship, the blowing of a conch, ringing of a bell, the beating of alloy metal plates, Jhanja, Majeera etc. were recommended accompanied with drum, mridangam, tabla, dholki etc.

For charging the yantra with the desired potency, the Rishis had also prescribed its proper puja with appropriate havan or sacrificial fire, with a specific number of recitations of hymns or shlokas by a siddha saint. Thereafter, the devotee was expected to worship that yantra daily with absolute devotion/confidence to retain its potency and to prevent it from becoming merely a decorative piece. This explains the insistence of rishis on performing puja daily after a bath at a fixed place, preferably by sitting on a clean/white woolen or silk mat which should be folded up neatly after puja and kept separately. It need not be washed daily otherwise the energy of the vibrations generated by the repeated recitations could also get washed away.

Sadhana

Transcendental Meditation

The Rishis attributed great importance to culture as well as the development of the inner faculties of human life. After countless years of experiments and progressive experiences, they developed a special system of exercises for increasing the strength, purity and power of all the faculties.

Having established the fundamentals of the functioning of the human body, they discovered various methods of feeding, resting and revitalising the body. The Rishis claimed that God could be attained through meditation because the mind eventually surrenders to a thought to which it is subjected to without interruption for long periods. Shree Ramkrishna Param Hansa used to say, "The mind is like a laundered cloth which takes the colour of the dye in which it is dipped. Even an average mind, if dipped in the devotion of God, will take on spiritual colours."

Every religion has its own mythology, rituals, philosophy and higher spiritual disciplines. All forms of training, whether physical, intellectual or spiritual, are manifestations of meticulous adherance with a zeal for progress. In transcendental meditation, the performer attains a state of communion with his deity. Rishi Kapil and Rishi Patanjali had developed and propounded in detail the psychological aspects of meditation. In the post — Buddhist era, Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya and others have expounded the science of Turiya-Samadhi (Transcendental meditation.) It is a state of going much beyond material infinity — the void beyond all forms and attributes. This is the negation of every thing conceivable or expressive. The Upnishads describe it as nor this, nor that, because the universe and mind, both are limited but the spirit of infinity, the Atma or Brahma, is real and true infinity or mounism (silence of speech).

After birth, every child sees worldly things around him and seeks comfort and happiness in them. Eventually, he develops the irresistible desire to possess them. The mind strenuously desires to acquire them but does not succeed in doing so. Failure and exasperation grips him. The child feels disappointed and this frustration pulls him closer to his objects of enjoyment. The Rishis had realised that only when we succeed in ridding ourselves of our dominant desires, does the mind become comparatively quiet. This realisation established the fact that the mind is a very changeable entity. The Rishis also discovered that no desired condition lasts for long, so by perseverance and concentration, they reached a single-point stage and attained a condition where the worldly things lost their influence over thoughts. Thus meditation became a sublime routine.

Muslims are known for punctuality in their Namaz — (holy prayers.) There is no justification for anyone to say that he has no time to meditate. The mind tricks every person in many different directions like a vicious horse which kicks, rises on hind legs and attempts to dislodge the rider, but if the rider manages to remain stable in the saddle, the horse quietens down and starts respecting the master. An egoistic man said, there is no God; that he himself is God; but if there is a God then he cannot escape His will.

"jantunām nara janma durlabham

mamvartamānānuvartante manush nā hi manushāt

shreshthataram hi kinchit:"

Rishis said that, "In this animal kingdom, birth as a human being is the most precious gift of God so, all human beings must live a pure life, a holy life"

The three most important attainments in life are memory, power and quiet (peace). Every one needs a sharp memory to be able to discriminate and choose the best. A man must have food to gain strength and rest (sleep) for the rejuvenation of vitality to face the struggles of daily life. The Rishis said that for sublimation and evolution, every person must meditate on God atleast three times a day. The Rishis associated the following three times with the Sun: When one gets up from sleep, he must pay homage to his deity or the rising Sun to prepare for the day's chorus. He must respect the mid-day Sun when he prepares to eat meals for his sustenance and the setting Sun to express his gratitude to the Creator for the successful completion of the day's work and pray for restful sleep to be able to rise next morning with renewed vigour.

The Rishis proclaimed that the most auspicious time for meditation is around 3 am every day, because, at that hour, mother nature is most serene. It is called Brahma Muharata. They also warned that if a righteous person, a yogi slips from Yoga, he is reborn in the family of the pure and prosperous, or he is born in a family of enlightened yogis only. However, birth like this is very rare to obtain. In such a holy family, he regains the knowledge acquired in his previous births and strives for perfection. Swami Vivekanand and his Guru Swami Ramkrishna were perfect yogis. The former was born in the house of a pure and prosperous family and the latter in a family of holy yogis.

In order to attain spiritual progress, one must try to dissociate from worldly attachments. For this purpose, The Rishis advocated meditation at a predetermined place, hour and location for accelerated concentration. To make this easier, they built temples — spiritually energised holy places.

The Rishis learned the self-satisfying values of Sadhana by observing the activity of the king-fisher bird who keeps sitting patiently, quite unconcerned about the surroundings on a river bank, yet keenly observing the fast swimming fish in the waters. On seeing a fish within its reach, it leaps, picks up the fish, gobbles it, takes a dip in the water as if to purify itself and returns to the banks. A really good Sadhak does precisely the same practice. He concentrates all his energies on self-realisation and finds supreme bliss called the Turiya state of meditation.

Havan, Yajna, Sacrificial Fire

All world religions have worshipped fire as the most benevolent element. From times immemorial, the sacrificial fire has been the most important item of our heritage. Every auspicious function, ceremony, worship or puja starts with fire in some form or the other. Every religious house-holder performs a small Havan every morning/evening in his residence or performs Arti of the deity with a special deepak (lamp) a candle or incense sticks. The importance of Havan has been mentioned in all the Vedas and other religious books. The purpose of performing Havan and related rituals has been the fulfilment of some materialistic desire or for expressing gratitude to God and the elements for fulfilment of cherished desires/blessings/boon.

Modern men regard Havan or Yajna as a primitive practice of camp-fire, but this is the sad result of the ignorance of its procedure and potency. Scientists have now established that even with a small domestic havan, performed daily, preferably with cow's ghee (boiled and filtered butter) and other specified ingredients produce valuable and purifying gases such as ethylene oxide, propylene oxide, formaldehyde, butapropiolactone and acytelene. These are purifying gases for good health and boost up the spirits of the performer and the surroundings. Just as an injection into the body yields better/quicker result than oral medicine; similarly the subtle mix of gases produced by a havan mix with the blood of the performer and other inmates and grant good health.

Ignorant persons consider it wasteful to burn ghee, grains and other ingredients, but scientists have proved beyond any doubt that the ashes of havan mix well with the soil and increase the field productivity manifold because the burnt ingredients preserve the traces of their properties in a suitable form to mix well with the soil. In certain medicines too, the doctors prescribe minerals converted into powders of digestible/absorbent form, and these medicines are considered to be more potential than ordinary powders.

Foster the Gods through sacrificial fires and the Gods shall foster you. By fostering one another without a selfish motive, one attains the greatest good. Fostered by sacrifice, the Gods certainly bestow on the devotee all that he covets, seeks, desires. He who enjoys the blessings bestowed on him, without fulfilling reciprocal obligations is undoubtably a cheat. — Gita. Ch. 3, 11/12 verse.

The Rishis performed havan as well as other rituals in their Ashrams (campus) with the sole aim of invoking divine blessings for the good of the society. The sound waves of the chants of mantras, associated with the gases, produced by the havan would purify the total atmosphere and ensure good

health and prosperity.

The Rishis performed havan or yajna themselves for the good of society as a whole, or at the request of the king, or a leader or trader or others with a limited objective. Just as a high power broad casting station spreads the generated waves far and wide, similarly, the chants and the gases helped the society or the person for whose benefit the performance was undertaken.

Broadly speaking havans of 14 different classifications used to be performed viz. for wealth, prosperity, good health, victory over the enemy, celebrations of victory or fulfilment of desire, invoking heavenly blessings for good rain-fall, a bountiful crop, peace in times of turmoil or disharmony etc. The most vital havan was for salvation.

Besides twigs and the dried leaves of selected/prescribed trees, the other ingredients of a havan are til-oil-seeds, barley, rice, wheat, sugar or gur, dry fruits, coconuts, raisins, agar, guggul, saffron, musk, vermillion, turmeric as well as the dry timber of specified trees. These substances, when burnt in the fire in well regulated quantities with every chant of selected Mantra, together with spoonfulls of ghee, would release smoke with gases rich in beneficial properties. Repeat havans multiply the potency. A havan is the best and most economical means of purifying environmental pollution. Guggal and camphor are very potential germs killers. With accompanying chants and the blowing of conch, bell or drum etc., the effectiveness of the gases becomes manifold. Ghee particles freeze faster than water particles. The principle was to create coolness underneath the clouds so that the clouds gather closer and generate strong wind and rain.

Modern scientists have created artificial rainfall by spraying some chemicals at high altitudes to mix with the clouds and induce their bursting for desired rainfall. Thus, they determined the area where rain was required urgently. Besides helping and nursing the standing crops, the rains also wash away the rubbish and cleanse the whole area and the atmosphere in general, thus creating conditions for good health and fresh environment. Above all, the purpose of performance of the sacrificial fire is to produce a sweet aroma which pleases the performer and helps him in identifying himself with the performance, as he puts his whole heart and soul in proper progress and culmination of the havan. Such single-minded concentration yields materialising effects. The best time for performing a havan is either in the morning or evening. The Tantriks prefer to perform their yajna at midnight, near a cremation ground.

Care must be taken while performing the havan of absolute cleanliness and purity must be maintained. The chants must be correctly uttered, otherwise any incorrect pronunciation or slip or mix-up can bring about undesired results which can cause irreparable harm.

The most popular yajna was Ashvamedha, whereby God used to be propitiated to announce that the performing king is the monarch of all the surveys and no one dared to challenge his authority; The other yajna, usually performed by householders was for God or the chosen deity to bless the devotee with children called Putreshthi-Yajna. Mostly Havans were performed for worldly gains, excepting those which used to be performed daily by the Rishis for the well-being of society in general, and for their own salvation.

The Mystic Romance Of Some Celestial Figures

To know what is auspicious or inauspicious, astrology and numerology can provide an answer. Some people believe that numbers have occult powers to predict future events and influence the course of life. Since antiquity, man has tried to understand the mystery of numbers. Pythagoras is considered to be the originator of numerology; but the Aryans knew all about numbers and their potency. Saint Leelavati is credited to have given the use of 'O' (zero) to the world to establish distinction and correlation between divine and mundane aspects. Each number has a potency under different zodiacal influences for good or evil effects on a person's destiny. Some numbers are considered to be beneficial, others harmful. No. 13 is considered to be inauspicious. This number is ascribed to Judas who had betrayed Jesus Christ and was the 13th person at the last supper. There is no explanation for the stigma attached to certain numbers such as 10 and 420, which are associated with cunningness and fraud.

In Hinduism, the number 108 is considered to be a holy number. A person breathes 21,600 times in 24 hours: When divided by 2, it becomes 10,800, resembling 2 horizons — the North and South Poles, emphasising 108 as basic. The sky is divided into 27 Nakshtras, each having 4 sectors of 30° each i.e. 27×4 = 108. The moon crosses 1 Nakshtra in 54 hours which, if divided into day and night, gives 54×2 = 108. Hindu rosary beads add upto 108; the significance is that 1 stands for Braham, 0, for universe and 8 for Maya (worldly illusions). The No. 1 is basic, without which nothing develops or multiplies; No. 8 is Maya which keeps growing or diminishing as in the table of 8, so Braham decided to remain at a distance from Maya; when Maya combines with Braham and endeavours to become one with Braham then it neither grows nor diminishes as in the table of 9.

Similarly, No. 3 is also universally applauded. AUM is a combination of 3 letters; so is God; For Muslims, the 3 letter word (in Urdu language) is Amin — phonetically, yet everybody worships only one Almighty. For Hindus, No. 3 represents the Holy Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirits in Christianity also represent number 3.

The Jews consider 613 as a sacred number: Their prayer shawl is woven with 613 threads representing 613 Torah of their holy book. The sum total of 613 is 10 i.e. Brahama, because 0 has no value of its own.

In Sikhism, the number 5 enjoys reverence: Initiation into the Sikh religion is accomplished by 5 Vanies (hymns) and Kirtan is concluded by 5 Pauries.

The Muslims consider 786 as very sacred in the name of Allah, the merciful: (7+8+6 = 31, 2+1 = 3).

The Christians symbolise Jesus Christ with 888 which stands for completion, justice and fate; the Devil's number is 666.

Strangely enough, No. 13 is shunned universally, but women in Belgium wear it as talisman and a charm for good luck. Thus, it is all a matter of faith which cannot be analysed or reasoned.

The arithmetical knowledge of the Rishis was of the highest order. In the Kaushitaki Brahamana, the

precise astronomical passages which were written around 3100 B.C. show that the Hindus were far ahead in astronomy. They could calculate and indicate the correct auspicious time for astrological or ceremonial occasions.

In an article published in the East-West Journal, February 1934 issue, it is printed that, "Jyotish or Vedic astronomical treatises contained scientific lore which kept India at the forefront of all ancient nations and made her the Mecca of seekers after knowledge." Brahamagupta, a treatise on astrology, is replete with astronomical data dealing with such matters as helio-centric motion of planetory bodies in our solar system. The obliquity of the ecliptic, the earth's spherical form; The reflected light of moon; The earth's daily axial revolutions, the presence of fixed stars in the Milky Way; The law of gravity and other scientific facts which did not dawn on the Westerners until the time of Copernicus & Newton."

The Arabic numerals, considered most valuable in Western mathematics, had actually reached Europe in the 9th century, via Arbistan, from India, where this system of notation had been followed and formulated ages ago. Modern scholars are told that Arabs and Greeks learnt the use of '•' decimal point and '0' zero from the great Indian mathematician — Saint Leelavati. Now, the West has acknowledged that India was the first nation to send and establish a satellite Arya Bhatt, in space.

Shri Ramanujam was a great scholar of mathematics and last year, another learned scholar, (who was put behind bars by an unaccountable government and remained imprisoned for several months), has solved a mathematical problem over which the world mathematicians were puzzled; This scholar has established that with the help of Leelavati's book, all mathematical problems can be solved easily, and fast. Dr. Narlikar and others are carrying the Bahrtiya torch of light to enlighten and illuminate the world's progress. Further, information can be gathered from Sir P.C. Roy's book, *History of Hindu Chemistry*; B.N. Seal's, (*Positive Science of Ancient Hindus;* B.K. Sarkar's, *"Hindu Achievements in Exact Science;* from *"The positive background of Hindu Sociology"* and from many other books and volumes. An organisation established at Choukhamba, in Varanasi (India), has collected many old manuscripts, palm-leaves writings, and are trying to compile the lost treasures of knowledge.

God Realisation: Idols Help

Man is inquisitive by nature: Persons ask questions about the universe and life. There is order as also beauty in this vast universe. The presence of beauty and regularity of events in the empirical world generates the feeling of wonder in the human mind: Man also looks within and reflects on his body and its inner metabolism and structure. Some are satisfied with a mere belief in the existence of the benevolent God who creates, sustains, operates and inspires the cosmos: Later they want to realise God. When this desire becomes intense and earnest, the quest for God-realisation begins to reveal that He must be everywhere. Reflections on Him intensify spiritual hunger for God realisation. He may appear before His earnest devotee in some form but such a vision is not the final stage of God realisation. We must try to understand, control invigorate, purify and sublimate the mind. God is with us and within us. He is the sole cause of our existence; all our fortunes, all our wisdoms are also because of Him.Feeling of nearness of God develops self-respect in us and makes us strong to fight against all the odds of life.

Where can we find God? According to the Upnishads and the realised souls, God is with us and within us. Let us strengthen our faith in purity, dignity and glory of human relations — the only way to better the world around us, is by eliminating tensions conflicts and strife. Life should be a saga of religion.

Tatvamasi! 'That Thou Art!' and 'Tat Tvam Asi' means you belong to Him. Thus the truth dawns on us that there is no difference between us and the Lord — We are one. Once we realise that God is with us our outlook towards pain, sorrows, difficulties and problems change.

For him who has conquered the mind, the mind becomes his best friend. Remember, whatever natural insight we have for spiritual life may get nullified by an unbridled mind. Whosoever seriously desires self-realisation must tend to himself first and then to others; "Judge not that ye be not judged." That is the way to become free from all bad habits. When we get absorbed in the love of God we get away from material absurdities.

We can make rapid progress in self-realisation by using the two-edged sword of transcendental knowledge and detachment from sense gratifications. Being thus freed from all illusions, we will not attach value to things of this world, nor consider anything to be great, pleasant or good, except the Lord's transcendental loving service. Being temporal and defective, our present affections jump from one object to another, always hoping/craving for complete satisfaction.

A prayerful attitude in relation to work is most helpful: We must practice awareness of the Divine Presence in every situation: As soon as a preoccupying activity is completed, transform it into conscious prayer and remember God. Brain can never make the fine discrimination required for spiritual life. Swami Vivekanand used to say, "Religion is not for empty stomachs; first food and then religion; To the hungry, God comes in the form of food." Lord Buddha, after passing through severe austerities, adopted and taught a moderate path regarding food. With respect to sleep, too much makes one dull and indulgent — There is an old saying, "six hours for men, seven for women, and eight for fools." Regulated food, sleep, recreation and work should be the routine.

The concept of worship is a very important factor in all religions. Idol worship occupies a very prominent place in the spiritual journey of a devotee who seeks to realise God. We have no independent existence apart/away from Him. We perceive objects because they are separate from us. To try to see Him is to make Him an object, but to do so is absurd because it is the human mind that aspires to comprehend God. As such, mind is the main instrument of God realisation. We cannot enjoy physical pleasures with the help of mere senses. There must be a powerful mind behind them. Without idol worship you cannot train your mind. An outward-oriented mind turns inwards and looks within.

Is there anything in our life that gives us joy without the enjoyment of sense objects? The answer is 'Yes' — it is sleep. There is no object and yet we feel happy and relaxed. After waking up from sound sleep, one spontaneously utters: I slept. This confirms that we can be happy without objects: There is no conscious enjoyment of happiness in sleep. This becomes possible in the super-conscious state of mind attained by enlightened souls.

Any idol of the Almighty represents God. God is one but He is called by many names and is represented in and through all these images. Genuine idol worship helps to make our mind powerful and sensitive enough to feel that divine touch in all our activities. Thus to enjoy the world, to forget the world and also to realise His divine touch, idol worship is not only essential in spiritual life; it is indispensable. Psychologists assert that if a man constantly broods over the thoughts about women, he becomes womanly; likewise, if a woman thinks hard of manliness, she tends to develop manly qualities, and if one constantly thinks of a brave person, one develops heroic qualities.

Again, to teach alphabets to children, we place an apple, show it to the child and say 'a' stands for apple; or 'c' for a cat. etc. Likewise, if one utters the word 'chair' the mind pictures a chair. Thus, some idol of God is a must for concentration, meditation and God realisation.

Some may feel that an idol is an imaginary object. But it is not a figment of any artists's fantastic imagination. Worshipping God in a human form is more appealing and satisfying. Mr. Whitehead said "If God takes any form, that form must be human because it is the most intimate form to human beings."

All religions assert that God judges our actions and rewards or punishes accordingly, so if we do good deeds there remains no need of worshiping God. The question arises "How shall he assess the goodness or badness of our actions and deeds if our apparent actions appear to be good but the motive underlying is bad? God cares more for the inner springs or motives of actions and deeds than for the overt acts and their material actions/consequences. Conscious intentions/motivations must be controlled and guided/ performed.

Again, some highly intellectual persons may be able to control and purify their conscious motives; but the unconscious motivation remains outside man's deliberate control. Here, idol worship in the sense of devotional concentration in the chosen image of God becomes essential and helpful. When one sincerely practices this sort of concentration/worship, one develops virtues and qualities such as sensitivity, self-respect, morality etc.

In idol worship the whole mind, energy, activity of intensive meditation while worshiping, takes the form of the idol. This kind of spiritual progress eventually culminates in realisation of the divine touch of God underlying our activities and existence. The final and consumatory experience of the realised devotee is purely impersonal and unitary, as well as unspeakable eternal bliss.

God Sun

Giver of life & vigour

Suryā atmā jagtasthushsch yadāditya gatam tejo jagadbhāsayate akhilam"
Sun is the soul of whole universe; Sun is the source of life for all living beings.

The Rishis had made a detailed study of the effects and benevolence of the Sun God for countless number of years and arrived at fascinating conclusions. The Sun has a bright saffron-cum-vermillion glow. At noon, it looks like a fire-ball: Its temperature varies during the different months and seasons of the year; it helps the growth and development of every thing on earth; it emits short and long rays of seven different vibrations of varying intensity; chemical changes are brought about by the sun rays in matter, water and air etc.

The Sun is the preserver and protector of life on earth. Above all, the Rishis discovered that sun rays provide vitamin D to help build strong bones, increase vitality and thus protect human beings from several diseases. Thus they started to worship the Sun and composed prayers, called Gayatri: *"Aum bhu: Aum bhuva: Aum swa: Aum maha: Aum jana: Aum tapa: Aum satyam: Aum tatsawturvarenyam, bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyoyona: prachodayāt. Aum."*

"We pray and pay homage to HIM who is the creator and preserver of the universe; He loves and protects all; Our whole body radiates with ecstasy owing to HIS powers, energy, potency and keeps us free from fear and vices and increases our brilliance."

Amongst Hindus, a Guru initiates a disciple by reciting the above sanskrit mantra into his ears and performs the sacred thread ceremony: This is considered to be the second birth of the disciple as an intellectual. The spiritual guru teaches the disciple the correct and appropriate utterance and pronunciation of this very potential mantra and explains in detail the benevolent effects of reciting this mantra at different hours of the day, in different seasons. Thus, for a scientist or an astronomer, the Sun is just a huge fire-ball emitting heat currents but the Rishis had established that the sun is a real, never resting, life force. Our whole life and existence depends on the sun.

It is unbelievable that water can be found on the burning hot sun, but chemists and star gazers have

discovered water not only in the hot gaseous heart of the sun, but also on some cooler spots on sun. Peter Bernath a research scientist has said, "Hydrogen and oxygen molecules both exist on the sun which is about 10,200° F (5,700°C)."

The Rishis announced that the rising sun, as well as the setting sun regulates the day and night; divides the year into 12 months of six different seasons by moving from the North Pole to the South Pole and vice versa. They gave different names to the Sun according to its effectiveness for every month of the year and the season.

> *"a pachitā prapatāt suparnō vaste ravi: Surya kranotu bheshjam Chandramā vopochhtū."*
>
> Sun helps the growth of different life giving herbs and the Moon helps humanity in getting rid of body ailments.

This truth is proved by peasants who remain healthy and strong even without enjoying two square meals a day because they are blessed by the Sun and the Moon all the year round. Westerners are now realising and recognising these truths; and they now derive pleasure and happiness from sun baths.

The world Health Organisation (W.H.O.) has recognised colour therapy by harnessing the rays of the sun to establish the energy level balance in the human body to get rid of ailments.

> *"ārogyam bhaskaradichhē moksh michhe janārdanāta."*
>
> An English proverb explains this Sanskrit statement as, "Light is life; Darkness is death." Rishis said the same thing, "Sun grants good health" but God grants the liberation of soul."

Dr. E. George an American scientist, has written that to test the truth that the sun is a living God, one day he went up on the terrace of his bungalow and stood naked for five minutes at 10 am; on returning to his room, he measured his body temperature and the thermometer read 100°F; on the next morning, he took a bath and at the previous day's time he took with him some fresh fruits, flowers and a tumblar full of fresh water on the terrace, bowed down respectfully to the sun, said his prayers for full eleven minutes, returned to his room and was astonished to find his body temperature normal at 97°F. "Faith moves mountains!," it is rightly said.

Dr. Robert Green had established a fascinating sanatorium in 1903 at Lesin on the Alps, where total treatment is given using sun rays. Many other doctors have adopted this therapy in USA as Naturopathy.

It is astonishing to learn that basic food for growth and development of the body is nothing but 'colour' because the vegetables or meat which people eat is concentration/ condensation of different colours in varying degrees and forms. There are colours and their combinations which can make a person sick, melancholic or even drowsy. The Rishis had mastered the technique and skill of obtaining nutrition and strength by associating and assimilating different colour rays of the sun and thus brightened their intellect to enjoy a long, healthy life without eating food for several days, without any loss of vitality.

Rishi Patanjali explains the technique of acquiring Siddhis. If one meditates on an object for a long time, that object eventually disappears, the seer and the seen merge into each other; When the seer and the seen and the process of seeing become one, one obtains mastery over the object called Samyama Shakti. By Samyama concentration on an elephant one can get the strength of an elephant. By focussing attention on the sun, one can bring its power into himself, he can see what is taking place in the entire solar system. By Samyama on the throat region, one can acquire the power to do without food or drink. Theress Neumann a simpleGerman lady, lived without eating food for years. On enquiry, she said that she is forbidden by her Guru to reveal the secret or temper with God's laws.

A few years ago a tribal woman of Orissa (India), was detained in judicial custody to make sure that she had attained non eating state using yogic powers: This Giribala has mastered the breathing technique to energise the Vishuddha Chakra located near the heart and just below the throat: This Chakra controls akash — space which fills our body cells. In year 2003, a tailor from Surat-Bulsar region of Gujrat, remained healthy without water or food for over four months. American scientists contacted him and took him to the USA for experimentations and to imbibe his secret. He remained there for some months and returned to India in due course.

Dr. G.W. Crile of Cleveland, USA has said, "What we eat is radiation; which releases electrical currents for the body's energy circuit, the nervous system, is given to food by sun rays." Atoms are solar systems. Atoms are the vehicles that are filled with solar radiance as many coiled springs. These atoms full of energy are taken in by us, as food. Once in the human body, these atoms are discharged in the body's protoplasm, the radiance furnishing new chemical energy. Our body is made up of these atoms termed as muscles, brain, and sensory organs such as eyes, ears, skin, tongue, nose etc." Laymen do not know the strides that science has taken. The transmutation of metals and other chemical dreams are getting fulfilled in the world's sophisticated laboratories. In the near future, man will learn how he can live directly on solar energy. The latest addition in this field is Nano Technology which is being studied deeply.

Chlorophyll is just one substance known to scientists which acts as a sunlight trap. Dr. M. Lawrence had written in New York Times, "It catches the energy of sunlight and stores it in the plant; no life could exist in its absence. We obtain solar energy from the plant and vegetations; or from the meat of animals who eat plants. The energy we obtain from coal or oil is solar energy trapped by chlorophyll in plants, millions of years ago."

The Rishis had learnt that the colours are just a hue of different wave-length-rays, radiating from the sun. The light that we see is only a small portion of solar radiation termed as the electromagnetic-speed of rays. Different alphabets and their correct utterances is really the speed with sound movement, generating and producing different colour impressions or visibility, thus Vibgyor colours and seven swar-notes/sounds are interwoven, inter-changeable.

The French Scientist Dr. M.G. Claude had given a live demonstration at Fontainebleau in 1928 before an assembly of leading world scientists, through his deep knowledge of chemistry about the transformations of oxygen. Dr. Claude explained how the sea could be turned by oxygen transformations into many million pounds of horse-power energy; how water which boils is not necessarily burning; how little sand mounds could be converted into sapphires, rubies, topaz etc. by a single whiff of oxygen: He predicted that in the not too distant future, man shall be able to walk on the bottom of the ocean without any diver's equipment. This great scientist amazed his audience by turning their faces black by taking the red out of the sun's rays. This noted scientist produced liquid air by an expansion method by which he was able to segregate various gases of air: He has also

discovered means of mechanical utilisation of differences of temperature in sea water at different levels.

The Rishis had discovered that plants are not able to absorb all the colours of sun rays; plants could assimilate colours in varying quantities and degrees, as such the stem and branches remain brown; fresh offshoots and leaves remain greenish-purple, buds, flowers and/or fruits show single or compound colours, that all flowers blossoming after sunset remained white, but some particular flowers which blossomed around sunrise or during the day changed their colours upto three times during the day due to the bright sun.

They also discovered that red colour rays were the longest and strongest, so they specified different coloured flowers for worship. They ordained that all Goddesses should be worshipped with red flowers. Most valiant, vigorous, brilliant and powerful Gods were also depicted in red colour and named Ganesh, Hanuman and Bhairav. The flags of these Gods and Goddesses were also determined to be red. Thus the potency and utility of red colour was known to the Rishis at the dawn of civilization. Communists and trade-unions have adopted a red flag and red salute in recent years.

Modern scientists have found that light rays travel at a varying speed of 400 to 730 nano-meters. 1 NM is equal to 1/100th million part of 1 meter length. Vegetation, animals and human beings see the rays as per their visual capacity but all living beings cannot see, absorb or assimilate all the colour rays. The mixture of all 7 vibgyor rays yields a pure white colour. Total absence of light is darkness or the black colour.

Great seers and thinkers had chosen different colours depending upon their property/potency. Magicians prefer black colour or darkness to learn/display their skills. Peace loving, calm and quiet persons love white; Muslims showed preference for green colour which denotes freshness; Nihang Sikhs like blue colour because they find self-satisfaction and peace in deep blue colour denoting love for solitude. Hindus and Jains prefer a deep orange colour resembling a flame; it indicates brilliance, alertness, self-confidence and purity of thought and mind. In short, the choice or liking for any colour is indicative of that person's character, thinking and behaviour. With adequate knowledge of psychic effects of different colours and shades, parents can make their children brave, brilliant, sober, intellectual or quarrelsome and so on, provided such parents have enough time to nurse and train their children for proper — distinguishing or distinctive upbringing.

Yogeshwar Shree Krishna

One great characteristic of all great scriptures of mankind is that they are written in plain speech popular to that era, but they hold profound depths of great value: The inquisitive reader feels, "veil upon veil will lift, still there remains veil upon veil behind." The inner meaning is ever fresh and new. As we gain in experience of life, with the precepts enjoined in the scriptures, we realise that they are very true. The world is not a haphazard conglomeration of living beings lumped together to go on as per their capability or understanding; A clear, systematic, and successful plan is visible.

Modern science also admits of a purpose behind all manifestations and of a mathematical mind that guides the universe. The modern man has the tendency to disown the idea of a personal God. He argues that if man cannot love and serve his own brother, whom he can see, how can he serve God whom he does not see? To him, God is his brother or nearest neighbour. Scriptures reiterate the same truth — Supreme cometh to a man along the way he chooses *"Ye yathaman prapadyante tam thaiva bhajami ham.* "In whatever way men identify with Me, in the same way I carry out their desires..."

"vasudeva sutam devam kams chanura mardanam, Devaki parmānandam Krishnam vande jagadgurum. mūkam karoti vachālam pangum langhayate girim; yatkrupa tam aham vande parmānanda madhavam." I salute Lord Krishna, the world teacher, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of monsters kamsa and Chanura, the supreme bliss of Devaki. I salute Madhava, the source of supreme bliss, whose grace makes the dumb eloquent, and the cripples can cross mountains.

These Sanskrit couplets start with describing blissful family bonds. To be the father of Shree Krishna was a meritorious blessing, a heavenly boon: All sons should make their parents glorious with good deeds, then alone the world shall become a heaven. Every person cannot be endowed with supernatural powers yet, there remain many other virtues, qualities which men can emulate.

Wicked and sensuous rulers in those days were called Aswas (rascals), so Krishna had to annihilate and destroy them. All living beings are, according to religious concept, Brahamkumari brides, and the Lord was the only bridegroom capable of guiding them to transcend body consciousness. The relationship between the individual soul and the cosmic reality was thus personified; and plan and purpose of life was revealed.

Many puerile moralists hold that Shree Krishna's relationship with numerous Gopis was scandalous. This position of pseudo-morality arises from perverse understanding because Shree Krishna had left Vrindavan-Nandgram at the age of nine. Is it ever possible for a young urchin to have passionate relationships with hundreds of women? The milk-maids remained faithful to their husbands and family. They invited each other and all of them joined in the mirth with the divine lad Shree Krishna who is also adored as Hrishikesh — the Lord of senses, and not a slave of the senses as normal

mortals are. The gopis enjoyed beatitude in the blissful company of Krishna.

Shree Krishna sets an example of the attitude that one should have towards one's worldly career. Long before entering youth, His sprightly sports at Vrindavan had been completed. He viewed this world as a huge playground and treated life as a delightful sport.

In that era there were no class/caste/career conflicts. Broadly speaking, society was divided in to four distinct categories: Brahmin, Kshtriya, Vaisya and Sudras. Birth as a Brahmin meant serenity, restraint, purity, intellectual pursuits as duties and intuitive scriptural knowledge, inclusive of moral administrative capabilities, simple living with bare earthly possessions, renunciation etc. as virtues. Kshtriyas represented heroism, vallour firmness, resourcefulness, duty bound lordliness, impartiality, generosity etc. — these were their virtues. Just as a farmer has to eradicate pests attacking his crop, Kshtriyas were duty bound to oppose evils in societies, protect the innocent, weaklings and punish the offenders/enemies. The duties of Vaisyas were agriculture, rearing cattle and other domestic animals trade/industry/ banking etc.

Creating wealth and material resources are glories of God hence Lakshmi — The Goddess of wealth is the spouse of the Lord who takes care of total social upliftment and welfare activities which includes all craftsmen, artisans, barbers, potters, job-workers, technicians and others.

Whenever Kshtriyas or Vaishyas organised any celebration, personal requests were communicated to Brahmins/Rishis to kindly perform/conduct the holy ceremonies. Barbers, potters, washermen etc. were individually invited to participate for the successful and happy conclusion of the event. The Mahabharat narrates that Sri Krishna himself volunteered to collect the leaf-dishes/bowls after meals and pour water to wash/clean hands of invitees. Rishi Aurobindo and politician Jaiprakash Narayan endeavoured to usher in a new era of social-order to mitigate class conflicts in India but alas, vested interests betrayed them.

Sudras were those who could render only physical labour and who may be incapable of setting up a calling of his own for his/her livelihood.

Unlike present day quarrels/conflicts for earning means of survival, back then every youth enjoyed a birth right of entering into and excelling in the art/craft/skills of his parents. Whenever any aspiring individual desired to diversify into any other profession, his/she had to prove/establish his/ her credentials in the presence of Guru or the head of the community. Thus, all classes of society enjoyed frictionless existence because every person enjoyed equal opportunity for his/her rise upto their capability, with full support and blessings of the society and the Guru.

The period of exile for the Pandavas was over: they had faithfully fulfilled all the difficult terms imposed on them for the sin of gambling. They were entitled to receive back their empire, but the covetous Kauravas bluntly refused to part with even one inch of the territory: Conciliation seemed to be impossible. Both parties knew Shree Krishna very well so both approached him to be on their side; He readily agreed to help both, on condition that the Pandavas and Kauravas would have to declare their preference: Shree Krishna said that they were free to choose between:

(1) His total army and allied resources; or

(2) He himself, totally unarmed on the other side.

Arjun opted to have Shree Krishna himself on his side; Duryodhan was delighted to hear Arjun's choice because he could have claimed what Duryodhan dearly wanted; Duryodhan's faith was in the army and its mobilization in his favour, whereas Arjun subordinated the power of the army and

gallantry to God's grace.

Shree Krishna demonstrated the divine principles of life, which are irrevocably linked with progress. On a battle-field, the warrior gives his best performance to win, so Shree Krishna chose Kurukshetra as the historic spot to rid Arjun of his perplexities. Body-centered life is itself a kind of warfare. Arjun was dead set for a deadly encounter with the wicked Kauravas. His conviction was that the man who dared to oppose him, opposed righteousness itself, so he asked Krishna to drive his chariot between the two arrayed armies to have a glance of all who were on the side of the sinful warrios. Krishna drove the chariot in front of Bhishma Pitamaha and the revered Guru Dronacharya — both were worthy of veneration to Arjun, so Arjun was on the horns of dilemma; to fight or flee, he could not decide. Finding himself of divided mind, he appealed to Krishna to guide and enlighten him to tide over the suspense. On all such occasions, Krishna came to his rescue and this was the most opportune time for the Geeta discourse.

To remove the despondency of Arjun, Krishna explained in detail that the Atman — soul is immortal: Feelings and emotions pertain to the body only, so be not attached to these weaknesses; swerve not from duty, transform deeds into Karm-Yoga. But Arjun remained uncertain, so to clarify the proposition from all angles, Krishna continued explaining to him the difference between deferring actions — The path of renunciation, knowledge, meditation, divine manifestation, discrimination, realisation, the sovereign science and sovereign secret, vision of cosmic form, devotion, Yoga of division of Trigunas, birth-functions-salvation etc; shraddha sublimation and finally the Yoga of liberation by renunciation. It must be noted that all these deep knowledges, from different angles/aspects was imparted to Arjun to decide and choose his correct duty at that critical juncture.

Shree Krishna was not preaching different philosophies nor was any comparison done to discriminate one against the other: It was just a conscience arousing chat to clear Arjun's doubts, but the exposition is so lucid and thorough that the Geeta has become the best code of conduct for every individual or society to perform all worldly duties and obligations without worldly attachment, for salvation.

Shree Krishna clarified the abstract teachings of the Vedas and Upnishads because of Arjun's craving for enlightenment. The love of the calf induces the cow to secrete more milk, which incidentally benefits many parched palates. The Geeta is an indispensable guide to every person who has the inner urge for enlightenment; even for saints who may be nearer to their goal of salvation. Life in secular or sacred aspects gets abundantly enriched by the sincere and faithful pursuit of the tenets of the Geeta, hence it is called Mother.

The common notion that Vedantism is concomitant with quietude was repudiated in no uncertain terms; that passivity or escapism was blown to pieces. Equilibrium of the mind can be had as much as in a sanguinary battle-field as in the quiet cave. Shree Krishna sets an example for the correct attitude one should have towards one's worldly responsibilities. Positive service is rendered by the wind which brings and assembles rain-hearing clouds; whereas a dust storm makes men miserable. The Geeta is not a dust raising whirlwind — the real values of a successful life, a brilliant code of conduct for one and all is enshrined in Geeta. With love and compassion, Lord Krishna imparts the knowledge of virtues, self-denial and strength to Arjun instead of pleasures that are sense-bound mutations.

Shree Krishna's message is Gnyana, Bhakti and Karma — knowledge, devotion and duty. In His incarnation he lived upto His preachings so, the Rishis declared *"kranvanto vishwa maryam"* — be like Krishna. He preached not to beg for sympathy or pity or mercy, because mercy can be shown to someone other than himself. Awake, arise, identify yourself with God — tatva masi — thou art three.

In this world, every one has to assert for survival — he who does not know how to fight for his rights does not succeed. Even the mother does not feed her own child until he cries loudly. To secure a job, a skilled person establishes his talents and dexterity. State-craft itself is a strategy in war. A resolute forward step in any field means that the person has fought for achieving success and victory. Krishna demonstrated himself how to face the bewildering situations in his career. The Geeta teaches one to equip oneself for winning the battle of life; His teaching is, "Fight the battle of life; Let the virtue in you vanquish the vice." The teeming bad tendencies very often outnumber the good ones: These good and bad tendencies appear to be close cousins because of their common origin.Opposed to each other as they are, these two tendencies try to dominate the very existence of man. The evil ones among them are adept at mobilizing in their favour, all possible resources and arguments or statistics.

Krishna is depicted as having a discus in his right hand finger and a conch in his left hand. The significance of these attributes is that for the evil doers, He uses the Sudarshan Chakra — discus to eliminate them and this message is carried to all ears through blowing the conch, a contemporary sublime way for all declarations. The Mahābhārat war would start every morning by blowing of the conch and at sunset the conch was blown again to stop warfare for the day. God is above any virtue or vice.

There is no need for Him to invoice Himself in any action; He remains as a witness only but His grace always favours 'good'. Shree Krishna's consent to become a charioteer establishes this truth. His presence as 'conscience' within all human beings is perceptible to all who are virtuous.

As per cultural traditions, our civilization had started with Satya-Yug when everyone was truthful and righteous; but human nature being as it is, persons of that era perhaps tried to become possessive, so that muscle power became supreme in Treta Yug when Rama had to take Avatar to annihilate the power drunk regime of Ravan: 'Might is right' was replaced by the incarnation of Shree Krishna to spread the message of love and harmony to reestablish the righteous path in Dwapar Yug. The wheel has moved down, persons have become egoistic again in Kali Yug; the night is darkest before the dawn so even this shall not last; the Wheel of Time shall move up to herald the Golden age soon.

Shree Rama Ideal for Humanity

"Shri Ramāya namastubhyam naram chaiwa narottamam Obeisance Shree Rama"

Rishi Balmiki desired to write an epic — a Maha Kabya — a grand literary composition describing the heroic deeds of an ideal human being so he implored Rishi Narad to tell him if he knew of any such national hero. Rishi Narad entreated Rishi Balmiki to write about the life and achievements of Shree Rama who had all the virtues of an ideal person; righteous, truthful, respectful, humble, humane, inspiring and handsome. In his Ramayan, Rishi Balmiki has portrayed Shree Rama as a human being who attained Godhood by virtue of his own physical, moral and spiritual achievements: He has faithfully narrated all the events of Shree Rama's life. In every episode, Lord Rama never lost his cool and balance despite the onslaught of tragic situations including a ferocious war with the demon king Ravan which was fought by Rama without a well trained and properly gear-equipped army.

The world today yearns for reestablishment of Rama Rajya; The world would not have known anything about the virtues and merits of Rama Rajya if Shree Rama had conceded to his coronation ceremony, as decreed by king Dashrath, in unanimous agreement of all his cabinet members and respected leaders of society: Then it would have been just a continuation of Dashrath Rajya, administered by Shree Rama. For the common man Shree Rama had become an incarnate of Bhagwan Vishnu incarnate — an ideal for worship and a powerful source of inspiration for good.

The world needed Shree Rama, a mortal human being to kill the demon king Ravan because the latter; had won a boon, according to which, except for a man, no one else could kill him. To authenticate his avatar — incarnation, as a human being, Shree Rama identified his total existence as a man, in his behaviour, relationships, dealings, administration etc.

In the following sequences, Rama exhibited superb calm even while receiving/conveying contradictory, yet appropriate thoughts without emotional upset. He never allowed any emotion to override his balanced actions/decisions. Even in the condition of extreme distress after Sita's kidnaping by Ravan, Shree Rama expressed extreme agony and cried like a mortal man, but never lost his cool; instead he vowed to make every possible effort to trace and win back Sita.

Human Behaviour

In the ferocious battle fought on the grounds of Lanka, Ravan had announced that if any of his soldiers attempted to run away from the battle-field, he shall be treated as a betrayer and killed without mercy: Shree Rama on the other hand, invariably cheered up his injured troops and always

remained at the head of the fighting units wherever required. In the final battle, the chariot and bow of Ravan was damaged so Rama stopped warfare, told Ravan to go back and return for battle in a new chariot with new weapons although Rama himself had no chariot and his bow and other weapons were intact so Ravan could have been slained easily. Seeing this unbelievable scene everyone sang the praise of Rama, "You are supreme God Vishnu incarnate." Shree Rama spontaneously declared,

ātm̄anam mānushyam manya Rāmam, Dashrathatāmajam.
"No, I am also a human being, Rama, son of king Dashrath."

Husband

On hearing the proclamation of his coronation, Rama felt extremely elated. In those blissful moments, he felt intense joy and rushed to give this good tiding to his consort Sita.

When Rama learnt about his banishment orders, he endeavoured to dissuade Sita from accompanying him to the forests where life would be full of difficulties and discomforts.

In those days, it was common practice amongst kings to have many queens but Rama had declared that Sita alone would be his wife, so after his victorious return to Ayodhya, the Royal Court decided to organise Ashvamedha Yagna, wherein, the victorious king had to sit with his wife for offerings. Shree Rama had a gold statue of Sita made instead of taking a second wife.

Human Rights

Rishi Vishwamitra had taken Shree Rama to his Ashram in the forest for protection of the Yagnas and the Rakshsas (Demons) continued their sacrileges and the killings of Rishis unabated, so Rama took a vow that he would kill all demons. On hearing that vow, Sita pulled up Rama saying, "You are a hermit now, and the demons have done no harm to you. As such, your vow to destroy them is unjust and unfair." Rama smiled and replied, "True, I am a recluse today, but I am a born Kshatriya, so it is my religious duty to protect saints, noble and/or weak persons. That is why I have brought my bow and arrows to kill the wicked demons; I shall not kill any innocent person."

Protector

Bibhishan was insulted and kicked out by Ravan from his court (darbar). He approached Shree Rama to seek asylum just when the military preparations were in progress to invade Lanka. The Monkey king Sugriva and other ministers opined against granting asylum to Ravan's real brother at that vulnerable stage: Hanuman alone commended the grant of asylum saying that during his exploratory visit to Lanka in search of Sita, he had met Bibhishan and had found him to be helpful. Shree Rama endorsed that broad minded and humane approach, and said "Even if Ravan solicits my protection he shall have it; I do not turn away anyone who seeks shelter from me.

Brother

In the Ramayan, there is no episode at all indicating any quarrel or jealousy amongst the brothers. Shree Rama regarded all brothers as vital parts of his own body. All of them shared unrivalled faith\confidence and respect for each other.

On the battlefield of Lanka, Lakshman lay unconscious after being hit by Naag-Pash and no medical relief was within sight. Deeply grieved, Rama said, "If I would have known that I shall loose my real brother in such a tragic situation, I would have preferred to disobey my father's command to accept banishment from Ayodhya because in this world it is not possible to have such a good real brother."

King Bharat sincerely wanted to bring back Shree Rama from Chitrakoot ceremoniously, so he proceeded from Ayodhya with royal emblems, army divisions and other paraphernalia. Lakshman received the report of Ayodhya's army marching towards Chitrakoot in full formations. He could not visualise any justification for such ominous preparations so he told Rama, "See, Bharat is coming with the army to annihilate us, but he seems to be sadly mistaken in believing that Shree Rama is alone and defenceless; I vow to kill Bharat if he has any malevolent intentions." Shree Rama counselled patience to Lakshman saying that, "Do not get so excited; I know Bharat very well; he is coming just to meet us; better wait and watch." And both brothers were happy to see Bharat and the mothers assembled there in a homely, affectionate atmosphere. Shree Rama went a step further and declared that, "If dear brother Bharat wants me to return to Ayodhaya, I shall abide by his decision despite my self- accepted banishment at the command of my parents." There is no parallel example of such brotherly confidence and mutual respect in the world literature.

King

Shree Rama is known as an ideal king who had laid his own venerable code of conduct by example, and not by legislation. In those days, the king was regarded as the 'father' of the total populace, so he had to be above any suspicion and also, benevolent, generous and righteous. These duties of a king explains the reason why Shree Rama agreed as king, to banish Sita because a commoner had cast doubt on her character because of her confinement in Lanka, under the guard of vicious Ravan.

On the battle field of Lanka, Ravan was lying dead and his brother Bibhishan refused to perform the last rites of a cruel and demoralised person. Shree Rama said:

"marnānānte vairani nivratamanā prayojanam kriytāmasya sanskāra: mamāpesya yathatavamam." "Ravan was a brave, mighty king and he had died fighting on the battle field as a brave warrior, he is no longer a wicked king so he deserves all the traditional royal respect: It is your solemn duty to perform all befitting rites: If you still decline, then I shall perform them."

Politics

To honour two boons which king Dashrath had given to his queen Kekai; much against his wish, Dashrath condescended to banish Rama for 14 years from Ayodhya and to make her son Bharat the king. King Dashrath could not pronounce his consent of banishment so Kekai had to inform Rama of this. On hearing that decision of his father, Rama was not at all upset. He said, "Dhāryan mansa dukham." Keeping his emotional depression under control, he went to his mother Kaushalya to break

the sad news and counselled her to accept the *fait accompli* with grace — a mother is invariably the first person interested in every lasting well-being of her children.

Human nature is unpredictable, people may change their behaviour under compulsions, so Rama went to Lakshman to persuade him to stay behind to look after their mother's Kaushalya and Sumitra, lest the step mother Kekai might torture them out of jealousy and brother Bharat might also ignore them because power corrupts.

Secularism

Shree Rama had won the hearts of all who came in contact with him; He never supported or acknowledged differences due to colour, caste or creed: Instead of adhering to royal protocol, he took pleasure in meeting persons who were considered to be untouchable as per the than prevalent social customs.

He called on Shabri, a religious tribal woman and accepted and ate the forest berries which she had tasted and preserved for offering. Nishad Raj Guha and baotsman Kewat were embraced by Rama like his own brothers: On hearing about this personal gesture, king Bharat and Rishi Vashishtha also embraced Nishad Raj and Kewat.

To fight against the powerful and wicked demons, Shree Rama raised an invincible army of village folk, monkeys, birds, bears, and even reptiles instead of summoning the well trained and best equipped army from Ayodhya or Janakpur. Love is not getting but giving; it is the result of pure living without obsessions or reservations.

Thus, Shree Rama had endeared himself to all his subjects, contemporary kings and sages alike: Everyone worshipped and prayed for permission to be close to him. These virtues and humane qualities of Shree Rama have made him so endearing, that even today, the world remembers and respects him, and yearns for the establishment of Rama Rajya to be able to live happily in peace and plenty.

Shree Hanuman An Ideal for Devotion & Loyalty

Hanuman is one of the most popular deities of the Hindu pantheon for his valour, dynamism, wisdom, presence of mind, loyalty and devotion to duty in letter and spirit. Deeds which called for the greatest courage, and will-power fell to his lot and he performed them upto the last stage of success. His devotees sing in praise of him:

> *Manojavam Mārut Tulya Vegam, jitendriyam Buddhimatām Varishtham, Vātātmajam Vānar Youth Mukhyam, Shree Rāmā Dootam, Sharnam Prapadhye!!*
>
> With a smart and alert mind, you command wind-like speed, you are master of all senses (Indriyas). Highest intellect and wisdom, child of Lord Wind, chief of monkeys, you are a loyal devotee of Shree Rama, I bow down to you for your prowess! This prayer does not sing His praise for valour/ courage/feats; but describes His virtues.

The gods desired to gauge the skills of Hanuman so they deputed Sursa (mother of snakes) who confronted him while he was getting ready to fly over the ocean: Hanuman politely told her, "Let me return after accomplishing Rama's errand and reporting to him Sita's where abouts; thereafter I swear to return to you to make me your meal; Mother, permit me to proceed..." Sursa tested Hanuman's skills and wisdom and complemented him for his presence of mind and courage.

Mythology maintains that Lord Siva always desired to remain close to Lord Rama who was actually an incarnation of Vishnu so, Siva incarnated himself as a monkey: This form was chosen by Siva because, though inferior to a human body, a monkey has few wants, does not require clothing or shelter and is able to sustain on vegetation which is abundantly available.

Hanuman was an extraordinary monkey with uncommon powers including the capability to fly/float in the air and assume any form worthy of the situation. This explains that a person becomes great by his deeds accomplished for the benefit of society and not merely by physical strength or intellect or money power.

The Gita also explains the same — that professional expertise is man's way/path for Godhood; by performing one's duties efficiently, one worships God and becomes one with Him.

Swami Vivekanand had said, "For the next 50 years... let all vain gods disappear from our minds. Hanuman is the only God vibrant and alive to every situation; all other gods are in deep slumber. What vain gods shall we go after instead of God who is all around us: Our real gods are men and animals around us — the first gods we have to worship are countrymen." The whole world is God's self-manifestation.

Sage Naarad has mentioned in Bhakti Sutra, that one should not argue in religious matters because there always exists scope for diversity in views: No one philosophy can be considered final based on

reasoning alone — reasoning being a faculty of Buddhi, which is not absolute. *"Vādo navalambyah."*

Intelligence & Attainments

Hanuman entered Lanka in the form of a dwarf, all the time analysing in his mind, the right steps He should take. During the search for Sita, Hanuman sees many women in the palace of Ravan, half asleep, half drunk and thinks, "The mind is responsible for the functioning of all Indriyas (senses), but my mind is unruffled and at peace," so he did not feel at all shy or disturbed. Seated on an Ashok tree, he was a silent witness to Ravan's visit and his appeals to Sita for a kindly glance at him: Finally, when Sita was desperate and decided on suicide, Hanuman started narrating the happenings with Shree Rama and convinced her to look-up. He then consoled her and gave her the signet ring of Rama. Sita was immensely pleased and blessed him profusely saying, "You are intelligent, smart, resourceful, the best amongst monkeys. You shall remain immortal and a treasure of virtues. You will enjoy the affection of Shree Rama."

Indrajeet used Brahmastra rendering Shree Rama, Lakshman and the army, unconscious. Vibhishan happened to see Jambavan lying almost half dead so he tried to talk and revive him: Jambavan spontaneously enquired whether Hanuman was alive? Vibhishan replied, "Why are you asking for Hanuman first" Jambavan replied, "If the courageous Hanuman is alive, he has the wisdom and vallour to bring back to life, the entire army even if dead but if Hanuman is dead all of us are as good as dead even if alive."

Shree Hanuman had been blessed with a boon of immortality by Sita — "So long as this world will speak about Rama, you will stay in this world to listen to the praise of Rama and the world shall be benefited with your presence." After the glorious return of Hanuman and Angad from Lanka, king Sugriva, narrated to Rama all the victories and accomplishments of Hanuman; Shree Rama enquired as to how could he achieve such stupendous glories to which Hanuman politely said, "Lord all the glory is your, I am a simple monkey jumping from one tree to another by nature," to which Lord Shree Rama said, "Hanuman, I am highly indebted to you for all that you have done and achieved for me."

There is no other single character in world literature, who never asked for any recognition or reward for all the heroic deeds and remained unassuming, so he is a God.

Maa — Mother Adi Shakti

Maa is phonetically a single alphabet word, pragmatic with a fervent plea for compassion and affection.

Swami Vivekanand had a vision of the Divine Mother at Kanyakumari and exclaimed, "The calm sea is the Absolute; the same sea in waves is the Divine Mother.

Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa's child-like adoration of Mother brought Her alive at Dakshneshwar, near Kolkata. Ancient cultures worldwide worship the Mother who is the focus of ritual sadhana. While talking about Tantra sadhana, the relevance is about the worship of Mother; "Shiva is a mere Shava — a corpse without shakti/Life prowess. Vedant views Her as the essence of infinity, indivisible and all pervading; Omni Potent, Omni Present and Omni Scient.

Kundalini Yog perceives the Mother as the manifestation of the inner energy to be channelised through the Ida-Pingla- Sushumna Nadies (Nerves in body). Divine Mother Shakti, in her various Avtars (incarnations) has defeated the demons. Allegorically speaking, it is the evolution of a soul to its acme point, which is the underlying nature of worshipping the Mother during Navaratri celebrations. The destruction of the Madhu-Kaitabh demon represents the removal of dreaded Kama, Krodha, and Lobh — passion and emotions like anger and greed, which envelop the consciousness of the devotee.

The second stage is signified by the destruction of Mahishasur and Raktabeej, by Mahakali — getting rid of distractions of the mind. The last stage is the destruction of the monsters Shumbh-Nishumbh — the avarna or veil of ignorance.

Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa brought alive the grace of the Divine Mother in his soul stirring saga of faith and affection. Swami Chidanand emphasised the necessity and meaning of Mother worship by showing that the invocation of the divine as Mother is a powerful spiritual tool to eliminate one's animal passion and is a call to our spiritual nature, teaching us Viveka — discrimination and putting us on the road to Vichara — self-enquiry or arousing Iccha Shakti, Gnyan and Kriya Shakti (will-power).

According to Markandeya Puran and Vaman Puran, Mahishasur had dislodged Indra from his throne in heaven and occupied it himself. This atrocious deed shook the celestial world and enraged the Gods — Brahmma, Vishnu and Shiva — their eyes started emitting fire. By fusion of divine energy a female figure — Goddess Durga appeared. Durga had ten arms and she rode a tiger armed with the trident of God Shiva, the Sudarshan Chakra of God Vishnu and the thunder bolt of God Indra. Thus armed, she vanquished and destroyed the monster Mahishasur. According to the epic Ramayan, Lord Ram also worshipped/ invoked Her before fighting Ravana.

Besides destroying evil, Ma Durga protects the virtuous and the needy. She is generous and is particularly kind to the weak, poor and the deprived. She answers their earnest prayers during times of distress, disaster, floods or drought.

With the end of rains the weather changes around and Navratris mark the advent of a new season. Durga as protector of life is worshipped for helping the devotees tide over the sorrowful rainy season or drought. Durga is also called Shakambhari Devi — the goddess of vegetation and agriculture: With Her benevolence, Maa Durga helps the preparation of soil for raising new winter crop.

Maa Durga is a symbol of woman power and also of emancipation and self-reliance. As mother of the universe, Durga is all pervasive so she is addressed as Jagdamba — Mother of the world. She is benevolent, loving, self- sacrificing, forgiving and full of concern for all Her children. Therefore, the devotees are urged to be loving and compassionate because those are the qualities of evolved living beings. Only a human being can develop compassion and empathy for others.

It is none of our business to think or say that one is suffering due to his/her past life deeds (Karmas). If it be somebody's karma to suffer, it is your duty (Karma) to relieve their sufferings. Helping others is your duty as a human being. It is really sad that the ability to grow in love or compassion for others has become a forgotten virtue. Think seriously of how, by ignoring this God given gift of a humane nature you are denying His gift and unconsciously going against His commands. Arise, Awake and Attain the milk of kindness and helpfulness. Faith moves mountains.

Mata Amritanandmayi is illiterate; she is born in a poor family of a fisherman, of Kerala. She has learnt by herself to say — dear son or dear daughter to all devotees who approach her for blessings. She has become a Mother to devotees all over the world: Her charities in the fields of technical education, medicine, higher academical education are almost unfathomable.

God Shiva
(Ardhanarishwar)

God Shiva is a par excellence manifestation of wisdom, prowess, will-power, action and bounty. He wears tiger skin as a loin cloth and his abode is a cremation ground or Mount Kailash. He is known for generously granting boons of riches, possessions and power to His devotees. God Shiva combines in Himself, one single entity of creator, preserver and destroyer. All these attributes are visible in His attire. He neither needs nor expects anything from His devotees. He is always ecstasy and joy personified.

Initially, God Shiva was one-half male, one-half-female (Ardhanarishwar). Later, He separated Himself in different forms.

Bodily, Bhagwan Shankar is camphor white but His throat is blue like sapphire and the whole body beams like bright coral. He has three eyes and four hands. He is depicted as a combination of Purush and Prakriti so His ornaments are also complementary. His root (9seed) Mantra:

Om ram ksham mam yam om. His Ga-yatri Mantra is *"aum tatpurushya-ya vidmahe- Maha-devaya dhimahi tanno rudra prachodaya-t om"*.

In Sanskrit, the word ling stands for rhythm and yoni for sound; the combination of rhythm and sound represents Jyotirling, or Buddhi and intellect. Thus, the concentration of mind and intelligence on any sublime aspect is the real and complete worship of Bhagwan Shiva.

The great ocean churning had thrown up deadly poison and other intoxicants besides many other charming gifts. Both Gods and the demons, declined to accept poisons. If the poisons and intoxicants were allowed to spread, the whole universe would have been destroyed. So, the Gods appealed to Mahadev Shiva to spare the lives of posterity. To preserve creation, God Shiva agreed to swallow the poison and intoxicants, to save humanity from total extinction. Shiva then thought that every thing has some good use so the poisonous items could also be converted for the good of humanity. Thus, instead of digesting the deadly poisons, He locked them up in His throat and to keep himself immune from heat and the other ill effects of drugs, He took the mighty Ganga (river) on His head and

wrapped snakes around His arms. Thus, humanity got an opportunity to benefit from poisons too by Shiva's beneficence.

This mighty kindness of God Shiva was acknowledged and praised by the Rishis, who proclaimed that while offering obeisance to God Shiva, the devotees must say "*om namah: shivāye*" — I bow down to Shiva. To make this Mantra more potent, Rishis ordained to sing: "*om namah shivāye om shivāye namah om*;" This chant became a composite obeisance for Shiva and Parvati. Normally speaking, for all other Gods, obeisance is offered by first uttering the name of the God to be propitiated such as *Shree Ganeshyāya Namah* or *Shree Rāmaya Namah* etc.

The God of Teerthankars Digamber sect of Jains and their followers remain naked; and a prominent sect amongst Hindu sadhus, called Naga Sadhus also move about naked. There is nothing obscene about it — for those who have a pure mind and self-control; such a state of living is the most powerful indicator of total control over passion or pleasures of flesh. Male and female forms are at the root of all creations on earth. When one thinks about progeny, an image of the Matru Yoni or female organ appears, but enlightened souls keep meditating on unity with the creator, so they meditate on Braham — Yoni i.e. the Kundalini which rises from under the spinal cord and travels upwards to Sahasrar (Thalamus). Likewise, for those who perform Havan — sacrificial fire, two essential requisites are (1) a Havan pot; and (2) to arrange the ingredients for the fire which potentiates the obeisance of deity. Psychologists call it will-power, and say, "Without interplay of positive and negative, energy generation does not occur."

Scientifically speaking, when electrons and protons come closer, a momentary rubbing occurs, generating a circular motion which causes the multiplication of atoms. This coming closer generates ecstasy and sound representing Mugdh-Nritya (the blissful dance of Shiva.) To demonstrate how a person can live celebate, He destroyed cupid — Kamdev, the God of passion: Later, when the other Gods appealed to Him to save and propagate progeny, He blessed Kamdev to regain his powers and energy for worldly persons, but for himself, He kept the 'bull' seated quietly in front of Himself. Thus, He is the first God to propound the harmony and superiority of having only one loving wife and two children — ideal family planning.

The renowned physicist, Gell-Mann, Murray had discovered that the basic building blocks of matter are a dozen; six quarks and six leptons; There are and particles these particles and anti particles annihilate each other when they meet, creating a burst of energy. The six quarks are called Up, Down, Strange, Charm, Bottom and Top. Albert Einstein's famous equation, equating energy with mass, comes into play here.

The shape of an atomic reactor resembles the Pindi of Shiva wherein incalculable energy can be stored for peaceful or destructive purposes. Thus, the main thing is energy (Shakti or potency), which cannot be defined/described in language. No one has seen electricity — though all of us use a bulb giving light or a fan or heavy moving machines but the basic element — electricity-remains unseen.

Rudra Natraj Shiva

The Rishis observed that instead of becoming holier and more spiritual, persons living in society were becoming increasingly vicious and avaricious. Evil appeared to be more popular than wisdom. Deeper study revealed that if a person gets what he wants, then having more of the same thing becomes repugnant so, to transform man from worldly desires to spiritual attainments in blissful settings, the Rishis decided to accord religious sanction and make men receptive of the true values, hence they adored God Shiva. The literal meaning of the word Shiva is 'well-being' or Kalyan. God Shiva was immensely pleased with the thought that by His grace, society can become righteous, pious and spiritual, hence He started dancing with ecstasy. To all those who worshipped Him with full faith, He blessed with all that they could wish for themselves. But when, after receiving coveted boons, men turned vile and became indulgent, He became furious and started dancing in anger to destroy evil-doers.

Seeing these facets of God Shiva, they addressed Him as Natraj, for these attributes. The ecstasy dance was called Mugdh-Nritya (absorbing dance) and the fury dance was named Rudra-Tandava (terror dance). Thus, God Shiva was regarded as the originator of all dance forms — totally 108 in numbers. At Chidambaram in Tamil-Nadu (India), a temple was built exclusively dedicated to Shiva, the Natraj. There are 108 forms of statues carved on the Gopuram edifice — entrance gate, of this temple, depicting the Mudras — pose, posture and expressions. The demon king Ravan had composed a hymn called Shiva-Tandav-Stotra, describing how these postures roused ferver. All students of dance start their performance/studies with prayers to Natraj for success in their dance career.

During the rule of the Chol dynasty, — kings in the 9th century A.D., a metallic statue of Natraj, cast in bronze, became very famous — it can be seen today in the museum at Madras (Chennai) — India. In this idol, Shiva is shown standing with His right leg on the back of a demon in a dance pose. His left leg and four hands are raised and leaning towards the right side of the body — this is an extremely difficult balancing pose. His hairs are shown well-groomed, but some hairs are shown waving. On His head, the Ganga and the Moon are shown resting. In the right ear, He is wearing a stud and in the left, a gold earning. A snake is coiled around the neck with raised hood and Shiva is wearing a garland of Rudraksh beads. One raised left hand has a bowl of leaping flames and the other left hand is bent downwards on the right side like an elephant's trunk. He is holding a damroo (a typical music drum), in his third hand and the next right hand is shown blessing the universe. He is wearing a tiger skin as a loin cloth. The idol is encased in an oval eight of flames, thus all the limbs are vibrating in dance. This pose is called apasmar. The uplifted leg indicates that the devotee should rise above worldly desires to attain salvation. Fire in one hand indicates purity, as Shiva performs this Tandav to the loud beat of His damroo.

Shree Lakshmi
Goddess of Wealth

All human beings cherish prosperity, health and happiness. Just as a mother alone can be very bountiful, affectionate and considerate for her children, the Rishis conceived Lakshmi as the goddess of prosperity and declared Her as the consort of Bhagwan Vishnu. The root (seed) Mantra to invoke Lakshmi is *"Om shreem hreem shreem on hṁ sa:"* Her Gayatri Mantra is *"Om mahālakshmi ch vidmahē vishnu patninch dhiṁahi tanno lakshmi prochdayāt om."* Oh Goddess Lakshmi, consort of Vishnu, I pray to thee! Oh Goddess Lakshmi, you look like brilliantly shining and appealing gold. Kindly come and be benevolent to me.

Goddess Lakshmi had surfaced after the great ocean churning along with the lotus hence the, Rishis seated Her on a many petalled lotus and addressed Her as Kamla: In Her praise, they sang: "Oh Goddess Lakshmi, you have four hands: In one hand you are holding a lotus, in another hand you are holding a nectar-pot, in the third hand you hold a conch to spread the message of righteousness and in the fourth hand you are holding a Bel-Fruit which is oval in shape, representing the earth globe."

The word Shree also became synonymous with Lakshmi. This single word denotes brilliance, prosperity, grandeur etc. Persons from all walks of life covet these blessings. The king, warriors, traders, teachers, seekers, all started worshiping Lakshmi. In almost all archeological excavations in India, Goddess Lakshmi is present.

As per the Skand Puran, Lakshmi had declared Her liking for religious minded disciplined, egoless, generous, gentle and benevolent persons, and added that, "My abode is the home of person who is sober, pious, detached and truthful; I dislike quarrelsome, bee-minded and selfish persons; I favour industrious persons."

Shree Sukta and Lakshmi Sukta are famous hymns; they are coded formulas of chemistry for producing gold with the combination of certain herbs and a sanctified process to be performed by a Siddha saint. Such a gold brick is preserved in India's Rashtrapati Bhawan — President House.

It is customary in India, on Diwali festival day for every devotee, to clean his residential house and office, to purify the area and offer obeisance to Lakshmi to propitiate Her. A Sanskrit couplet describes that:

> *"Yashyāsti vittam sa nara kulina, sa pandita, sach shrutwan gunagya, sach priyam, sach darshaniya, sarve gunā kanchan mashra yanti"*
>
> A person who commands riches, is a noble soul, he is a wise man, his biddings and commands are carefully heard and respected by all: He is the darling of all; He is charming, lucky and a successful person; thus all virtues are embodied in wealth".

Saraswati

Goddess of Learning

Goddess Saraswati shines like a pearl, like the Kund flower, like the full moon or dew drops. Her dress is pure white: She holds a Veena (musical instrument) like a royal sceptre (a symbol of authority), and is seated on a white lotus. For creation, preservation and destruction; Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh worship Her for Her deep, balanced thoughts; and for appropriate inspiration; "Oh Devi! remove my ignorance and protect me."

In this world, wealth and knowledge — both are essential for development, growth and progress; absence of either of them can make life miserable and meaningless because Saraswati is the Goddess of speech, without which we can neither speak, express thoughts or undertake research etc.; Nor can we sing and praise Gods and other elevated souls. Thus, Saraswati is the first Goddess, then Lakshmi, to denote progress and prosperity to possess and enjoy the riches in life: To protect and preserve earnings, the Rishis invoked Goddess Durga — Goddess of power, Mahakali and others. After enjoying life in the world, men desired salvation so the Rishis again remembered to sing hymns and recite prayers to pay homage to the Gods. Thus, from from beginning to the end, everyone seeks the blessings of Saraswati for all round progress and protection.

Goddess Saraswati wears bright white robes; Her vehicle — the swan, is also spotless white. These attributes indicate Satogun (truthfulness) which is the highest virtue in life. The devotee must also have a sparkling, clean character and a magnetic personality. Every single pearl is attractive and eye-catching but if the pearls get threaded together they form a necklace. Every intelligent, wise man is like a shining bulb of light, but by coming together, such individuals make a girdle or a necklace.

While starting to learn, every student begins with prayers to Saraswati. Thus, all alphabets and consonants are miniature Saraswatis. Since a child learns from the behaviour and talks of elders, the parents and teachers can create the correct impression and build the character and career of the child only when their own character and career remains spotless and magnetic. It sounds strange and astonishing that the seven vibgyor colours of a rainbow turn white when mixed properly.

Saraswati is ādi-pravartaka-introducer of all arts and skills. She is all music and gaiety. Even to punish the waywards, She uses the Veena as Her sceptre of authority — She holds no weapons. Only a loving and affectionate mother can be so sweet and inspiring to enthuse the devotee.

A learned man never hankers after money: Wealthy persons find pleasures in lavish living which makes them vulnerable to down fall, whereas a wise person finds joy and happiness in nature, reading and writing about his blissful experiences. The wealth of knowledge cannot be stolen by any thief, the king cannot take it away by taxation, it cannot be divided between brothers: Truth is that knowledge increases by giving it to a genuine seeker, thus real supreme wealth is knowledge. This explains why a king is respected in his kingdom only whereas a wise man commands respect every where.

Saraswati is also the Goddess of all arts, crafts, skills, and excellence which are always joyous and colourful. Among birds, the peacock is the most majestic and colourful of birds, full of mirth and dance, so the Rishis preferred a peacock as Her vehicle. The Jains also worship Saraswati, and

address Her as Chakreshwari, or Shrut Devi, or Vidyawati and so on. They have a swan as Her vehicle, as also a peacock.

To remain protected by Saraswati, Shree Ramchandra as well as Shree Krishna placed Her on their head symbolically by keeping a peacock feather in their crown. Shree Lakshman had tucked a peacock feather in the head-gear of Rāma when he was preparing to proceed to participate in Dhanusha-Yagya in the court of King Janak. Around that moment, princess Sitā arrived in the royal garden to worship her deity. Shree Rāma was fascinated by seeing Sita and she was also attracted towards him. Similarly, Shree Krishna had to face all sorts of difficult and tricky situations all through His life so, from early childhood He kept a peacock feather on His head like a crown, indicating that Saraswati will always guide and give the best suited counsel, appropriate for the occasion:

"supichh guchh mastakam devim vachmanayant deva"

Saraswati does not wear ornaments on Her body; She wears a garland of fragrant flowers, all white. She holds a book in one hand, a lotus in another, a rosary in the third and a Veena in the fourth. All these symbols indicate that for looking attractive and impressive, one does not need artificial decorations. Learning, sweet music and recitation of hymns are real, supreme attributes.

In Isavasopanishad, the Rishi has said that there is no end to knowledge. Those who claim to know everything, really know very little because no one can be the master of all knowledge and all the arts and skills; — one might specialise in some calling, but there too he has to admit — "Thus far and no further..." The Rishis admitted the same thing by saying, — Neti.. Neti; that there is no end to learning, every step we take in life has fulfillment for its goal, the urge for wholeness for its motive. It is one thing to have a philosophy and quite a different thing to live it and express it in life, character and conduct. The ass carrying its load of sandal wood knows only the weight and not the value of his load; nor the spoon, the taste of the soup; True culture is comprehension and compassion.

Hindus as well as sufi saints keep a broom — a bunch of tied peacock feathers to bless the devotee: These feathers are said to be rapid conductors of energy currents so the aura, energy of the saints can pass to the devotee by way of touching the devotee with a peacock feather broom.

Lord Ganesh

Giver of Success & Prosperity

"Shree Ganeshaya namh: Ganesh poojmedyastu

Vighnastasya nā jayate! Aik Dantaya vidamahe,

vakra tundāya dhimahi,tanno danti prachodayāt!!"

Rishi says, worship God Ganesh and no difficulties shall arise. Start all religious ceremonies and auspicious celebrations with the worship of Ganesh to avert possible mishaps. He is the commander of all regimes and giver of all success, prosperity and happiness!

The most affable and popular God is Ganesh. He is the friend and supporter of all human endeavour — a true remover of all obstacles to success; He is omnipresent in myths, legends, arts, rituals, virtues, crafts and history: Idols and statues of carvings of Ganesh have been found all over the world. It is said that Ganesh is an ideal combination of all the good and powerful elements, so He is invoked, propitiated and worshipped at the start of every auspicious function or ceremony. His followers and worshippers release and consign Him on Anant-Chaturdashi day, around August every year, and pray with zeal for His rise and return for the benefit of mankind.

Gods have many manes — the count goes upto 1000. Each name indicates His appearance, shape, form, attributes, function, insignia, temperament, etc., depending upon the need of the event, occasion or solemnisation. The Rishis have fixed certain root letters to invoke every God. "Gam" is the root or seed mantra for invoking Ganesh. Everyone prays to God with some objective in mind and this desire determines the manner of utterance and pronunciation. Correct sound creates positive vibrations in the atmosphere which assumes a shape representing the desired thought. Thus the shape, form and vision of God in the cosmos depends upon the quality of the devotee's call — sober, merciful, angry, etc. A good devotee sees the God in a shape coinciding with his thoughts and urges, and prays intensely for achieving success. God Ganesh is All in one. May He bless all with the fulfilment of cherished good desires. *"Shubh kāryeshu sarvadā!"*

Lord Ganesh has always been extremely kind and benevolent to His devotees. Vedas and Purans acclaim that Ganesh is the primordial God because He is known to have annihilated the emotional disturbances listed below.

From times immemorial, in different eras, the devotees invoked His blessings and to relieve them of their distress, Lord Ganesh assumed suitable forms, attributes, attires and appeared on the spot, riding different vehicles — animals, birds, Seshnag snake. Different Rishis and devotees have ascribed different names and have written varying descriptions in praise of the Lord and His miraculous performances for eradicating the miseries.

Incarnation Name	*Vehicle*	*Demon Killed*	*Conquered*
Vakratund Mahakaya	Lion	Matsarāsur	Jealousy
Aik Dant	Mouse	Madāsur	Arrogance
Mahodar	Mouse	Mohāsur	Infatuation
Gajānan	Mouse	Lobhāsur	Greed
Lambodar	Mouse	Krodhāsur	Anger
Dhoomra Varna	Mouse	Ahantāsur	Intoxication
Vikat	Peacock	Kamāsur	Carnal Love
Vighna Hartā	Seshnag Snake	Mamtāsur	Ego

To realize Him is the supreme goal of human existence and that He can be realized through many chosen paths. Vedant teaches good of all; Indian philosophy reveals process of immediate perception and experience rather than abstract scepticism and arguments.

Shri Ganesh Mahima Dynamism

In 1912 Mr. W.R. Yule was Eastern Secretary of M/s Atlas Assurance Co. Ltd., of England. His wife purchased an idol of Ganesh and took it with her to England and gifted it to her daughter. Thrilled with a grotesque and quaint idol, she invited her friends to see it and started tossing it indolently. Soon thereafter, she felt feverish and her temperature kept rising. Doctors could not diagnose the disease so Mrs. Yule got worried. In her sleep, she saw a strange looking Sadhu approaching her, riding on a bull: The sadhu commanded her to respectfully return the idol to India. Terrified with this dream she dispatched the idol to Mr. Yule with a note describing the horrifying developments. Mr. Yule summoned his assistant Kedar Babu and narrated the events. Kedar Babu accepted the idol reverentially, and took it to the saint Keshwaji, who was preparing to proceed to Vrindavan for installing Panchyatan dieties at Katyaini Peeth Temple, to install the Ganesh idol there ceremoniously. Readers are advised to visit Vrindavan for obeisance or read Ganesh- Monograph of Elephant Faced God.*

The Rishis conceived of a God having all the possible virtues and attributes so, in their vision, the form of Ganesh emerged with an elephant head to indicate that the commander must be able to think deeply and remain cool, anticipate, determine and decide about every event. Hence, such a God should have a large head to think deeply, undisturbed. The dog's bark does not disturb an elephant; nor does an elephant run like a dog for food. The truth is that Mahavat (Driver of elephants) has to coax them

to have a hearty meal, otherwise the elephant refuses to eat anything. Farmers use a winnowing basket to segregate and blow out chaff or useless grains. The elephant has large ears to hear every thing but it remains unruffled and retains only that which is valuable. Despite its large head and ears, the elephant has disproportionately small eyes. It is not the size that matters. One must have X-ray eyes to see the minutest object. The elephant can see a small needle on the ground and pick it up with its trunk. God Ganesh sees every happening.

Once, all the Gods assembled to appoint their commander. There was no consensus so they requested God Shiva to decide the issue. Shiva said that whoever completes three rounds of the earth first shall be the commander, All the Gods picked up their vehicles and the race started, but Ganesh remained seated by the side of his parents. After a while, he got up, took three rounds of his parents, touched their feet and sat down. On their return, all the Gods saw Ganesh sitting merrily, so they jeered saying, "Poor chap, how could he join the race sitting on a tiny mouse?" They solicited Shiva's verdict. Shiva asked Ganesh if he had anything to say in his defence? Ganesh replied that parents represent the universe; he had completed three rounds of his parents, thus he had completed the race long ago. Shiva and all the Gods appreciated his wisdom and foresight and Ganesh was accepted as the leader and was accorded first position for worship at all occasions.

Ganesh has two teeth but one is half broken denoting that everyone must have faith in one God. Knowledge can be limited, but faith must be implicit. Thus, the two teeth emphasise the difference between knowledge and faith.

Ganesh has four hands. In one hand He holds an anchor goad which keeps the elephant under control, and keeps the passions under check; in the second hand, he holds a whip with a noose — readiness to whip the unjust and unfair. In the third hand he has a bowl full of sweets, indicative of total happiness, and the fourth hand is raised for blessing the faithful devotees.

Ganesh chose a mouse as his vehicle. The vehicles of other Gods can carry them only upto the gate, whereas the mouse can take Ganesh to every nook and corner of the dwelling. With its sharp teeth and claws it can burrow any mountain. It can also swim with its claws. Thus Ganesh enjoys entry every where.

Ganesh has a large pot belly which indicates that He can stomach any talk and information and use it discreetly. It also denotes that Ganesh can eat and digest any vegetarian food and remain strong and vigourous.

Rishi Vyas desired to write the Mahabharat epic and complete the book with great speed. No one came forward to accept the assignment. Eventually, Ganesh was persuaded to take up the challenge and He agreed to undertake the job on condition that the dictation must be non-stop. Rishi Vyas accepted the condition saying that "Ganesh shall not write or take down any sentence/verse without understanding its full meaning." Ganesh consented. So, whenever Rishi Vyas desired a break, he uttered a difficult verse (shlok) and Ganesh was left alone to ponder over its correct meaning before writing it. What a smart mutual understanding!

* Printed /Published by Oxford Clarandon Press, Oxford. England

Nag Devta

God lives in the heart of all living beings. This sentence emphasises the good and evil being of all living souls — not just of humanity, but also of animals, birds reptiles, rodents, insects and many other species, who have contributed to human development, progress and evolution. The Rishis preached respect and love for flora and fauna and for all those who have been useful in one way or the other, Snakes protect the crop from damage by rodents and beasts. Snakes are great lovers of good fragrance and aroma. They love to be closest to sandal, kevada, ketaki and other such fragrant trees so the Rishis concluded that one who loves pure scent can never be evil by nature. Some varieties of snakes thrive only on pure air — they eat nothing. This virtue indicates that one can attain the highest stage without any attachment or lust. Snakes do not bite or harm anyone until they are hurt or disturbed. The snakes eyes are said to be photogenic so after seeing any person once, it can spot that person anytime, anywhere.

Kundalini is said to be an omnipotent coiled serpent resting below the last vertibrae of the spinal cord. Lord Shiva mastered kundalini and accepted snakes as ornaments on His body: Lord Ganesh also adopted them as an ornament. Bhagwan Shree Krishna had also mastered kundalini so he could dance on the hoods of Kalia Nag and drive it away from the river Jamuna to the ocean. Lord Vishnu mastered Kundalini and made Seshnag's coiled body as His cosy bed; Seshnag is said to be holding the earth on its 100 hoods.

Gods had deputed Sursa — the Mother of snakes to test the skill and intelligence of Hanuman just when Hanuman was readying to cross the great ocean to reach Lanka in search of Sita:

Takshak, the king of snakes caused the death of the great King Parikshita. Bhagwan Buddha and Bhagwan Mahavir of the Jains, were protected by mighty snakes during their transcendental meditations (Tapasya.) In all the Pagodas snakes are portrayed as deities with five to seven hoods. It is said that if any person is protected even from the vagaries of weather by a snake with its spread-out hood, that person becomes a great king or a great saint: Hindu Tantriks believe that snakes are nature's divine guards of the treasures hidden under ground: Forest guards vouch that the snake is the most reliable body-guard in the forests when their master is asleep. However, Muslims regard snakes as their worst enemies, and kill them.

In Yajurveda and Atharva veda, snakes are mentioned as being, the deity of water and denoters of underground biomagnetic energy currents: They crawl and zigzag while creeping on ground but when in water, they renounce all curves/twists and keep swimming like a stick — straight. The Rishis reckoned that snakes represent Kaal or Period. The age or life span of snakes has remained undetermined to-date. The King Cobra is said to be the longest and most deadly poisonous snake. In the shakun-shastra, snakes are regarded as vital-certain indicators of good or bad omen. If a snake crosses the path from the left to the right, it brings good-luck, if a snake crosses one's path often while on a journey by road, it indicates that some ancestor is reminding that person to perform certain religious rites for the concerned ancestor's Moksha (salvation).

Water borne snakes are not poisonous; only some varieties of surface living snakes are poisonous,

the rest are harmless. In ancient times, the strength of a person would be denoted as so much snake power as opposed to modern practice of reckoning it by so much horse-power. Hindu scriptures praise snakes as rulers of Nag-Lok. The Vasuki Nag is said to be their king emperor.

In Sri Lanka, Cambodia and some neighbouring countries, and Egypt, idols of snakes have been unearthed in archeological excavations. The world famous Haffkine Institute of Bombay (India) is renowned for its snake farm and laboratory, where the snake poison is drawn for certain life saving drugs/preparations, vaccines etc.

In Hindu scriptures, a snake king is supposed to have a saphire in its hood. The snakes cast away their upper-skin cover after a certain age, with absolute ease.

In olden days, the Hindu kings would train and nurture young, attractive women who were fed on snake's poison; These charming ladies used to be deputed for enticing enemies or for spying on them, They were called Nag- Kanyas. Putna the sister of King Kansa had painted her nipples with deadly snake poison in the futile attempt to murder infant Shree Krishna.

Nag-Panchami day, once in every calendar year, is fixed for the feeding and worship of snakes throughout India. The snake charmers of India are known all over the world for their expertise in catching and training snakes. Some expert Tantriks in India and Africa eliminate snake poison using mantras and Puja. They consider this feat as the greatest pious act that enables them to save a life.

Vriksha Devta — Kalpvriksha

'From times immemorial, man has lived with trees because they provided him with shelter, fuel, implements for agriculture, timber for house construction and warfare; leaves, fruits and seeds; and inspiration for spiritual growth.

The Rishis endeavoured to explain spiritual truths by associating them with vibrant symbols enabling the common man to see and experience those sublime truths. Thus, these symbols acquired religious authenticity and served allegorical purposes. The Rishis realised that trees are the best friends of mankind; the roots helped the conservation of soil, provided shelter to earth worms to thrive and thus increased the soil fertility; the branches and leaves were inexhaustible reservoir of oxygen (Pran-Vayu), for survival, so they announced to Agni Puran — "He who plants a tree and protects it like his son, will always be remembered/respected; May the trees be the givers of peace and prosperity."

The Rishis had studied total flora and fauna. They discovered that even grass has several varieties, beneficial as well as harmful: Durva grass always remains green and fresh; Kush grass has a strong fibrous structure to remain unaffected by water etc. Thus, even the grass blades were sanctified and declared as essential ingredients of worship on all ceremonial occasions.

In the Rigveda and Atharvaveda, some trees are defined as Vriksha Devta. Hindus consider all trees sacred and worship them, for instance Pipal (Aswattha), Banyan, Goolar, Amla Vilva (Bel), Sandal, Neem, Mango, Babool (Acacia) — all are worshipped. In ancient India, grooves of trees and flower gardens were reared with loving care. None of the sacred trees were permitted to be cut. Immortal Rishis like Valmiki, Chyavan, Dhanvantri, Bhardawaj, Charak, Sushruta and poets like Kalidas have written volumes on trees, flower creepers and other plants. Tulsi, Pipal, Banyan, Amla Goolar, Bel and Coconut were given the mythological name — KalpVriksha because these seven varieties were considered to be wish- fulfilling, and obtained from ocean churning. Some other trees are also mentioned with praise and adoration — Ashok, Kadamb, Champak, Vakul, Nagkesar, Parijat, Jamun etc. But Banyan and Pipal acquired the greatest distinction: Tulsi — a bushy plant, became a must in the worship of all deities except Shiva and Ganesh; Pipal and Banyan trees were called Bodhi-Vriksha because Lord Shiva used to sit under a banyan tree for religious discourses; and Bhagwan Buddha attained enlightenment under a Pipal tree. Even though all trees are sacred, in this chapter we are dealing with two main varieties of trees, which became associated with religion and became cultural symbols.

Bodhi Vriksha

In the Gita, Lord Krishna said, "Amongst trees I am Aswattha (Pipal). It is said that the Gods and the souls of pious ancestors rest on the branches of Pipal. A person with a strong mind and intellect alone can perform Sadhana (meditation) sitting under the Aswattha because it exudes powerful energy currents with the rustling of its shiny, conic leaves to evoke inspiration and intuition. This explains why the Pipal is not a domestic tree: It is usually grown in temples or rest houses and inns, where people can come for worship. The religious sect of Visnois ceremoniously plant trees and they are

always prepared to lay down their life to protect a tree instead of permitting it to be cut by anybody.

Scientists have established that in the human body, the pineal gland's secretions help the brain to remain alert and alive. The chemical properties of this secretion which stimulates understanding and intellect are found in abundance in pipal juice, hence it is called BodhiVriksha. It is interesting to note that the same chemical is present in the herbs Shankh-Pushpi and Brahammi; as also in banana and plum fruits.

In the 7th century, Huentsang — a Chinese Buddhist monk had come to India to pay obeisance to Bodhi Vriksha located in Gaya (India), a holy city. He was astonished to note that the leaves of the Bodhi Vriksha had no defoliation even in autumn or summer. Its leaves wither and fall only on Buddha's Nirvan (salvation) day, called Buddha Purnima (May month) and new leaves sprout the very next day, so hundreds of Buddhists and seekers assemble under this tree on that auspicious day and while returning, they take a few withered leaves with them as mementos. Emperor Ashoka the Great, had got a brick enclosure built to protect this BodhiVriksha. History records that Prince Siddharth did penance and transcendental meditation in Gaya. Due to intensive Tapasya, performed without food or water for several days, he had become very weak. This made him realise that starving the body of nutrition was not correct penance; instead, one should starve his\her passions to purify the body and mind; but by then, he had become too weak even to stand on his legs. Some how he crawled upto the bank of the river Niranjana, which was flowing nearby: He took a bath, but could not muster enough strength to return to his meditation site. Luckily, Princess Sujata happened to pass that way and noticed that a mendicant was struggling to reach the shade of the Pipal tree standing nearby. She rushed to her palace and returned with a bowl full of Kheer a delicious dish prepared with rice boiled and cooked in milk with added sugar. The Princess offered that bowl to Siddharth who ate the Kheer and felt revived and fresh. Thus, on that auspicious day, under that Pipal tree, around 3.30 am — called Brahama Muhurta by the Rishis, Siddharth experienced a beaming light in his heart and mind and, thereafter he was called Gautama Buddha. It was the full moon day of Vaisakh month — May.

Intuitionally, Gautama discovered that:

1. life in this world is a continual struggle; but
2. ultimately salvation can be attained with a determined effort and an inner urge for real happiness; and
3. detachment from worldly desires is the only path to remain immune from misery or wants of the body.

Gautam Buddha decided to spread these truths and propagated them for the enlightenment of all.

Thus, the Bodhi Vriksha became a symbol of Buddhism. Later, the princess SanghMitra, daughter of King Ashoka, took a branch of this tree to Sri Lanka and planted it at Anuradhapur to commemorate and to spread the teachings of Bhagwan Buddha for attaining salvation.

In the 15th chapter of Gita, Shree Krishna says to Arjuna — "Among trees I am Aswattha." In Sanskrit, this word means that which is not today as it was yesterday. This word refers to worldly existence. Aswattha also means Pipal tree which belongs to Banyan family, the speciality of both these trees is that they supply sap from above and send it down to earth. In this respect, the functioning of the world resembles that of these trees. Both receive their sustenance from above and reach down to earthly existence. Life is self-expressive; — This truth is made known to us by the leaves of the tree. He who reads and understands the Vedas is basically initiated into the study of spiritualism. Prakriti or

Nature is the immortal teacher or Mother of all Truths.

Rishi Valmiki had written that Lord Shiva used to give discourses on RamCharit Manasa sitting under the shade of a Banyan tree and this tradition was continued by Kakbhushundi who imparted the same knowledge to Garud. Folklore has it that Savitri sat under a Banyan tree and with her transcendental meditation and the power of her Satitava she drove away Yamaraja (Lord of death), who had come there to take away the life of her husband — Satyavana. Married Hindu ladies worship the Banyan tree for a long and happy married life on the Vatsavitri Day.

As stated earlier, Kalp-Vriksha was also obtained from ocean churning and it was gifted to Lord Indra for safe preservation because in those days it was the only known wish-fulfilling tree.

Another famous tree is the Ashok. During her captivity, Ravan had permitted Sita to sit under the Ashoka tree, known to relieve persons of all their worries in due course.

Yet another tree, worshiped by Hindus is the Kadam — a tree under the shade of which Shree Krishna used to sit, play and swing.

The Amla tree was patronised by Rishi Chyavan for rejuvenation properties; and the Vilva tree is patronised by Lord Shiva: It is the only tree which has three leaves sprouting together like a trident. It is said that the juice of its leaves provides relief to diabetics: Its fruit and the pulp within, called Bel, are the favourites of Lord Shiva. The Vaidyas prescribe eating its raw or dried pulp to stop diarrhoea. The juice of its leaves keeps sugar in blood, under control.

Almost all well known trees were studied for their beneficial properties: The Rishis had prescribed different trees for their predominant virtues, individually, as well as in combination with some other equally beneficial tree or a creeper or medicinal bushes.

Tulsi

"tulsi kananam chaiva grahe yasyavatishthate tad grham teerth bhoot hi jayante yama kinkara."

Wherever Tulsi is planted, in grooves or in house-holds,
that place becomes sanctified as a place of pilgrimage and the sepoys of the LORD of DEATH—Yamdoots dare not enter that place.

Lord Vishnu is perpetually shown associated with the Goddess Lakshmi and Tulsi, hence Tulsi is worshipped by all. In India, it is regarded as the most sacred plant. It is a erect bushy plant of about 4 ft. height. Its leaves are aromatic and are dotted with minute glands; the flowers are purplish, in small clusters on slender spikes and the seeds are yellowish or reddish. Two varieties — Shyam (blackish) and the green are grown in houses, gardens and temples. Scientists have declared that wherever Tulsi is grown in great numbers, that area becomes pollution free. Even dried leaves retain their original properties.

The oil obtained from the leaves have the property of destroying bacteria and insects. The leaves have traces of mercury so the extract is now used as an ingredient to cure cancer in Ayurvedic medicines. The juice or infusion of the leaves is very useful in curing bronchitis, catarrh and digestive complaints: Its paste is a sure cure for ring-worm if applied regularly as also for many other skin diseases: Drops of its juice cure ear-aches, its decoction cures common cold and the seeds are useful in urinary problems: It also relieves malarial fever.

Thick branches of Tulsi, are dried, and cut into beads of equal shape/size to make rosary beads for devotees; malas or necklaces are also prepared with beads, and devotees wear these with faith.

The Rishis had ordained that if a ghee-lamp or incence sticks or even flowers are not available for performing Puja or worship, tulsi leaves can be offered to the deity: This explains the importance and value of Tulsi, which is even otherwise, a MUST for every solemn puja or celebration.

Kalash Ghat

(POT)

The Rishis knew that lightning strikes a deadly blow so, in order to escape the calamity, they developed the use of copper rods and pots. But to their dismay, they found that copper turns blackish due to moss or fungus growth so, they enamelled or plated the pot with gold for it to remain bright and visible from a long distance, and placed it on the temple pinnacle.

> *"bhratah: kanchan lep goshita vahistamrakrate sarvato mabheshi kalsh: sthiro bhava chir devalayoshyo pari:"*
>
> All good persons, do not like to get tainted so, in order to humour the copper pot the Rishi sang the above verse, "Oh brother Kalash (copper pot) do not get upset due to your gold plating by us; we promise to enthrone you for good on top of the temple so that all devotees shall know your importance and bow to your brilliance."

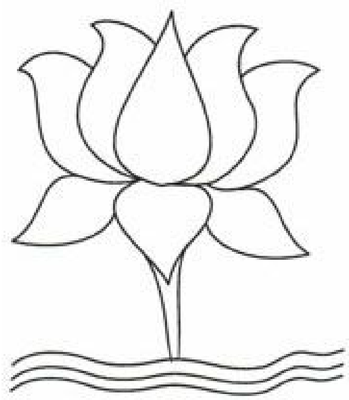
In the early stages of civilization, men found that the rains were very helpful for crops and also provided pure drinking water but alas, they lasted only for a short period during the year: They also noticed that during the rains, tanks overflow and rivers swell causing floods, but in summer, they dry up. Since they needed water all year round to quench their thirst, they developed a container a (kalash), and were overjoyed to see that they could enshrine God Varun in the kalash. Thus, the worship of Varun started by worshiping the kalsh; the Rishis ordained that every ceremony should start with the worship of kalash and sang in praise of kalash;

> *"kalsashya mukhe vishnu, kanthe rudra samasrita: moole tatra sthito Brahma madhey matra gana smaratah:"*
>
> "At the mouth you are Vishnu, at your throat lives Lord Shiva. Lord Brahma adores the base and at the belly all goddesses are established, thus in a small pot," The Rishis conceived the presence of all gods and goddesses and composed this hymn in their praise.

On all ceremonial occasions, a pot is filled with clean water. On the mouth of the pot, fresh leaves of mango, betel-leaf etc. are placed and then, a coconut is placed on top. Thereafter, the kalash is decorated with a Swastik and other ornamentations.

The Rishis likened the human body to a kalash, saying that just as a pot contains fresh water for all occasions, the human body has the Lord within, provided the persons keep their body pure and healthy. In Hindu homes, virgin maids stand with a Kalash filled with water, on their head at the entrance to welcome VIPs.

Saint Gnyaneshwar, in his commentary of the Gita, called the 18th concluding chapter as kalashodhyaya. In folklore, villagers sing that no one should demolish his pot simply on seeing water-bearing clouds. Such is the all pervading importance/glory of the Kalash.



Lotus

The lotus is a very important symbol of our cultural heritage. Hindu scriptures are replete with praises of the lotus, because it is very sacred to all the Gods. "He who acts abandoning attachment, dedicating the deeds to Braham, is untainted by sin like a lotus leaf by water."

God Brahma and Bhagwan Buddha are both depicted sitting on a lotus. The Sun is like a red lotus rising from the blue ocean/sky. Lord Vishnu holds a lotus in one of His left hands. Goddess Lakshmi also holds a lotus, presumably because both were obtained from the ocean churning. It is a water-borne flower, yet not even a drop of water stays on the lotus or its leaf, so it is regarded as the most appropriate symbol of detachment from surroundings. Poets use the lotus as a simile in praise of the feet of Gods and Goddesses. King Bharthari had composed a couplet saying, "Surrounding waters add to the grandeur of a lake with the presence of the lotus which is so beautiful and graceful — made for each other." The female lotus is called Kamalini. From Sunrise, the lotus keeps facing the sun, and at sunset, the lotus closes itself to blossom again the next morning. A Yogi too, keeps meditating for enlightenment from morning till sunset and then retires. All the Vedas sing praises of the lotus.

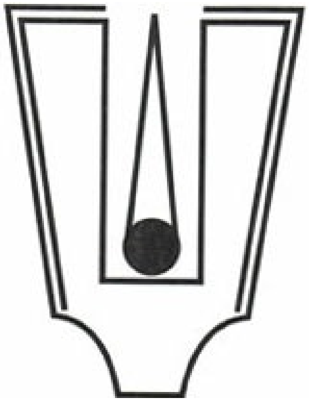
In Yoga-Shastra, the six chakras are depicted with the lotus as the base. In the human body, life and strength are said to be flowing from head to toe, but in spiritual reckoning, the Kundalini rises from under the spinal cord and travels upwards, crossing lotus-based chakras to reach Sahasrar.

According to the Mahayan sect of Buddhism, all souls originate from the lotus. The Tibetan Buddhists and the Tantriks of Nepal recite — AUM MANI-PADMEHUM in praise of God. *'aum manipadmehum."*

In Muslim architecture, the lotus has no importance, but in India the Muslim rulers used the lotus in their architecture. The Taj Mahal was built by architects and craftsmen from Arab lands, yet the architecture of the Taj Mahal remarkably differs from accepted Islamic norms. It reveals the perceptible influence of Hindu spiritual architecture. The dome of the Taj Mahal resembles an upside-down closed lotus, resting on its petals. This reveals that Shahjehan had great understanding and admiration for the Yogic Chakras.

After the lotus blooms, it remains fresh on its stalk for a long time, but every evening, as the sun goes down, it closes and droops. Again with the rising of the sun, the next morning, it straightens up again and gradually manifests full bloom and beauty. Hence the sages accepted the lotus as a unique symbol

of the unfolding of spiritual qualities within man, of light within himself, as a consequence of developed pranayam and Kundalini.



Tilak, Dot, Bindu

The earliest human being saw the shape and form of his own body on earth and he also saw the burning ball like shape of the Sun in the sky. This was his first acquaintance with shape. Thereafter, he saw the clouds assuming incomprehensible shapes and dimensions so he decided to give shape and form to his own ideas and thoughts and realised that the starting point of all shapes and forms is a point. Geometry recognises the point as a shape without dimensions which, though it cannot be described, still exists. Every drawn line is a string of points so he conceived a starting point to describe his thoughts, visions and emotions and to express them with the help of his own sound. Thus, sound and point became intertwined. A dot or point is the seed of language expressed by sound so it was the finale of the highest attainment.

"bijakshram param bindum nadam tasyo paristhitam sa shabde sakshre kshine ni: shabdam paramam. Shiva Shakti Niketanam Vishnu Shakti Niketanam."

A dot or point is the abode of Shiva-Shakti, Vishnu- Lakshmi-Shakti. Every person belonging to any society or civilization had indomitable will and urge to communicate his thoughts, emotions and experiences to indicate their distinct identity, so symbols were developed.

To face the hardships and struggles of life all human beings devoted themselves to find comforts and happiness, culminating in Sat-Chit-Anand — truth-mind-bliss, and to establish and spread these sublime experiences, symbols and signs were conceived for faithfull depiction for instance, — "call a rag a flag and people will rise as one entity to defend it." Similarly, groups of men and woman adopted different types of Tilak or linear symbols which were further segregated for man/woman to wear on their body to denote their sect and idealogy.

A deep study of the human anatomy revealed common, significant, exposed portions/parts of the body for applying Tilak or Bindi on the forehead and forearms. The Rishis declared that the junction of the nose-root and the meeting point of the eye-brows is the most sensitive part of the body. It is the Agya-Chakra. The wheel of wisdom is located there so this vulnerable spot must be kept warm and protected.

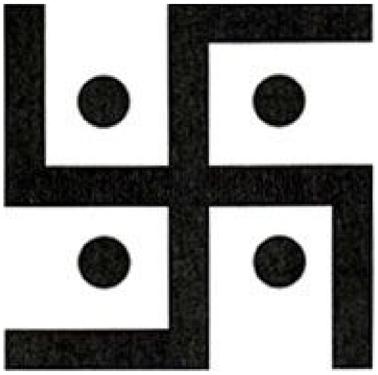
Later, Rishi Charak and Rishi Sushruta elaborated that the forehead, forearms and temples can be used beneficially for Tilak or Bindi, which can indicate as also be decorative. The most popular forms are a dot, or 'U' shape or a trident shape or three horizontal lines with a dot at the center called Tripund, on the forehead and forearms.

Wearers of these symbols were advised to use Gorochan — a composition of lime, vermillion, turmeric, saffron, sandal, musk, agar, sindur (red oxide like powder), ash etc. for men; women were to use sindur or vermillion on their skull- center to provide warmth to the peneal and pituitary glands located near the Thalamus.

The Tilak or Tripund or Bindi (dot) were declared to be helpful for good health of the brain, eyes, ears and the nose because these applications maintain a fine pull on the veins and nerves underneath the forehead, nose-root and skin of the forearms helping to monitor proper and adequate flow of blood mixed with oxygen. The Rishis laid great importance on the Tilak at these locations, for better functioning of the fore-brain. The human brain has over 12 billion cells called neurons which work through an inter-related and interconnected nervous system and activate the human organs to respond appropriately.

The scientists ascribe the activities of the adrenals to the inner brain called the Thalamus. It is believed to be the most developed part of our thinking equipment. It receives all incoming sensations, judges and coordinates these suggestions when the Thalamus is stirred. It sparks off other reactions in the main cortex and a special kind of brainwashing takes place — a technique elaborately adopted and practiced by communists, dictators etc. in recent times.

The fore-brain controls the instinctive behaviour and decision making pattern of human beings. It is a relay station. Thus, in acupressure it is considered to be most important to keep all such active and positive points pressed/pulled and charged like a battery, for proper and alert functioning. Incidentally, the same benefits are enjoyed by ladies wearing ornaments on their body provided the ornaments are properly made with precious metals, in the shape, size and correct weight to suit the constitution and body build of the wearer.



Swastik

Symbol of all round prosperity

"swastina indro vradhashrva, swastina poosha vishva vedha: swastinastakshryo arishthanemi, swastino brahaspatir dadhatu:"

May God Indra be benevolent and kind to us: Poosha Deva — God of intelligence be pleased and be benevolent to us; Bhagwan Garud whose arms and weapons are invincible, protect us from all ills; and Bhagwan Brahaspati (Guru of all gods) protect us from all odds. Thus in this Mantra, the word 'Swastik' is repeated four times to ensure all blessings

For success in every undertaking human beings pray to God by invoking hymns, singing praise, recitations etc. The Rishis had determined a shape as a symbol to propitiate cherished desire. The root of Swastik is su + us su means benefic and us means existence; whosoever desires to have glory, prosperity, progress, success etc. is advised to invoke the Swastik Yantra. The Aryans had adopted the Swastik as a symbol for the good of humanity. The Hindus added some more arms to the Swastik to represent happiness in married life and worldly successes. Thus, the Swastik became a combined symbol for all Gods, and the traders and business community adopted it for all occasions.

Christians the Red Cross Society and the medical fraternity adopted '+' as their symbol denoting religion, health and care of all persons. The straight verticle line represents God and the horizontal line denotes humanity, with full faith in God to traverse the world for benevolence.

Generations of research and experimentations coupled with self experience with beneficial results by the Rishis, revealed that every symbol has miraculous potency. With proper usage, one can enjoy its blessings. Oriental Swastik denotes peace, prosperity and sublimation. The Germans adopted the Swastik with arms extending on the left side with the argument that the angle formed by the leftward side shall move the Swastik clockwise at accelerated speed under the force of the wind. This Swastik yielded temporary temporal prosperity which ultimately resulted in ruin. The inverse or perverse use of anything will result in negativity, so the Rishis ordained that the sides of Swastik arms must remain on the right side — moving or stationary for positive vibrations and benevolent results.

Dr. Antoine Bovis, a French scientist has developed a scale called the bio-meter to measure the energy levels surrounding men or material, a temple, church and so on. World scientists gave it the name Bovis. Zero Bovis represents absence of all energy — death. 6500 Bovis is the energy level of a normal healthy person. 6500 to 16000 Bovis is the range of energy level of different Chakras/Yantras

within the human body. The sanctum sanctorum of holy temples, churches, mosques, Gurudwaras etc. measures around 11000 Bovis. AUM has an energy level of 70000 Bovis so the chanting of AUM alone with concentration, raises the physical and subtle body energy level to 70000 Bovis. The Swastik has a formidable energy level of one million Bovis, but in an inverse direction, the results become negative.

In the book *Siddhant Saagar* it is written that the central point of the Swastik represents the uterus the origin point of the universe. The vertical line represents Shivaling and the horizontal line represents MatraYoni (the female organ). Their cross represents formation, evolution and coming into existence of the universe. Later, the devotees added some dots, in and around the Swastik to include all living beings in whatever shape, size or form etc they may be inhabiting the world, in order that all of them may be happy and may contribute to the well-being of total humanity.

The Rishis believed that human beings are a miniature form of the universe. Whatever is visible on all planets is also present in a human body in a minute/abridged form so, it is within the reach of all evolved souls to awaken and utilise all pervading energies. These facts establish beyond doubt that the ancestors of men were not monkeys.

Plato, who was a great thinker/seer of Greece, had put up a notice on his research lab — "NO admission for those who have no knowledge of geometry and advanced maths" because apparenty, abstract shapes and figures are not merely diagrams; but materialistic symbolic forms of what a devotee is contemplating and meditating upon. The triangles, squares, penta-hexa-octagonal shapes etc. represent a deity, so when a devotee propitiates and invokes that deity through the medium of selected diagrams for the fulfilment of some cherished desire or seeks a boon, his concentrated thoughts concretise and yield results. The Swastik is one such omnipotent symbol. A Siddha Yogi alone can explain its all embracing significance, potency and efficacy with worship procedures.

Sudarshan Chakra

Sudarshan Chakra, Lotus, Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth), and the conch were obtained as gifts from the great ocean churning. Lord Vishnu accepted these gifts and He keeps them close to His heart. Lord Vishnu uses the Sudarshan Chakra as His invincible weapon to punish evil doers. The enigmatic aspect of the Sudarshan Chakra is its unfailing capacity of chasing the target upto destruction unless it is commanded by the Lord to return without harming the target. Rishi Durvasa had to face this ordeal when he tried a foul attempt to denigrate king Ambreesh. Rishi Durvasa ran to save himself from the attack but no one could save him from the infinite chase of the Sudarshan Chakra. He was advised to approach Lord Vishnu for pardon. He surrendered himself to Lord Vishnu, but Vishnu declined to spare him until king Ambreesh agreed to pardon him, so Durvasa went to king Ambreesh, apologised for the wrong he had done to the king. The king was pleased and apealed to Bahgwan Vishnu to pardon the Rishi.

Bhagwan Shree Krishna also had a Sudarshan Chakra in His right hand: He also used the Sudarshan only to punish the evil doers. King Shishupal was hostile towards Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna had warned Shishupal not to exceed beyond 100 abuses or derogatory words. In his antagonism, Shishupal ignored this warning so Shree Krishna beheaded him as soon as he crossed the limit.

The word Sudarshan conveys two meanings (1) Good to look at; and (2) easily visible; But the word Chakra (a circle or wheel), makes the matter complicated because this composite word can be interpreted to mean Time; Or Day/Night, or the different seasons moving in a circle. To explain, Sanskrit has two words derived from the same root — Pratima = a statue; and Prateeka = Symbol. The first word creates the shape of an image, whereas the second is purely indicative of many hidden meanings. A Chakra as a symbol reveals a deeper insight. In their obeisance to the Sun God, the Rishis prayed:

"God Sun, seated on a chariot of wheels, glittering like gold, holding a Lotus in hand, be kind to us."

Initially, this couplet was composed in praise of the Sun God who looked like a red hot circle, for Him to become benign, because the Rishis had realised that if He becomes angry, He might dance in fury — Pralaya Tandava and that shall be the end of this world. The same fear — the world coming to an end is expressed in the Shiva Tandav, fury dance of Lord Shiva, where He is shown with an aura of leaping flames around Him.

Great kings and emperors adopted the Chakra as the symbol of suzerainty; Mighty kings used to assume the title of Chakravarti Samarat (Monarch of all he surveyed) and neighbouring kings had either to accept and agree to his suzerainty or be prepared to settle in battle.

The epic Mahabharata mentions a very interesting episode. A disciple named Uttang had bought ear-rings to be presented to the wife of his Guru but a demon-Takshaka, stole them. To regain the ear-rings Uttang chased Takshaka right upto hell. In that under-world called Patal Lok, Uttang saw six princesses driving a giant wheel of 360 spokes. On his return, he enquired from his Guru about the significance of that wheel. Rishi Deerghtama declared that a giant wheel with spokes keeps moving

non-stop in the cosmos. The 360 spokes represented 360 days of a year and the six charming princesses moving the wheel incessantly, are the six seasons of the year.

Bhagwan Buddha had also introduced a wheel for prayers, called the Dharma Chakra. Buddha said to his followers, "come, let us put our shoulder to the wheel to move." This wheel develops upto 13000 Bovis energy when rotated with speed by the followers of Buddhism as prayer rounds. This practice helps the devotees to increase their concentration/ meditation.

Bhagwan Shree Krishna had also said the same thing differently, "I have come to set in motion the power of Dharma-Righteous Duties. Quarreling and fighting is not the true nature of noble souls. Spirituality is the privilege of every individual."

Shiva tantriks had developed certain geo-mechanical devices encompassed in a wheel frame representing the cosmos. They divided the universe into a triangle representing Sat-Chit- Anand — Truth-Mind-Bliss. In Kundalini awakening, the devotee arouses the seven chakras located in the body through well defined Pranayam process.

History records that the Babylonians also knew the use of the wheel.

In old Egyptian temples, wheels were in use before 3000 BC.

If the bark that protects the tree fails to grow and expand along with the growth of the tree, it shall choke that tree; But if it is a living tree, it will shed and break the bark and grow new bark for itself. The age and growth of trees is also ascertained by the number of circular rings which appear on the stem every year.

The enigmatic aspect of a wheel is the axle around which the wheel moves, but the axle remains undisturbed.

Whether I call you ear-ring or anklet,
Or name you as broach or a bracelet;
The inherent gold glitters bright in You,
so is the Self, shining through in view.

Shree Chakra : Shree Yantra

The garbh-grah — sanctum sanctorum, of Lord Venkateshwara's temple in India, has a highly powerful Shreeyantra beneath the foundation, so this temple has become a wish-fulfilling holy place for real devotees. It is the richest temple in India.

It is claimed that a Shree Yantra made with five precious metal alloys in the prescribed composition as laid down by the Rishis and sanctified by a Siddha saint, acquires undisputable potency of bestowing riches on the devotee for several years as per the potency infused in it.

Sir John Woodruff and Dr. N.J. Button of U.K., and Dr. Zejerta of Germany have undertaken a deep study and research on the scientific construction and celestial effects of Shree Yantra. In Russia, Dr. Alexi Kulaicheva has attempted to analyse and study the formation of Shree Chakra or Shree Yantra on a computer to establish its precision and accuracy.Scientists in China, Japan and the spiritual heads of Tibet and Nepal have studied Shree Yantra and its cosmic effects with proper propitiation as prescribed by the Rishis.

The Tantriks developed certain well defined geo-mechanical devices encompassed in a wheel, representing the cosmos, saying that the whole universe is bound in a circle. They divide the universe into a triangle with an apex on top representing Sat-Chit-Anand, or Fire, Shiva and Male. They also drew triangles with a downward apex to represent Water, Energy and Nature. A combination of both such triangles, crossing the arms of each other represents Creation- Preservation-Destruction. The center point of both triangles remains unchanged representing Braham — The great Source of all creations. Jagat Guru Adi Shankaracharya has given a vivid description of Shree Yantra in his book *Sondarya Lahari*.

To propitiate Goddess Lakshmi, there are two independent collections, Shree Sukta and Lakshmi Sukta. It is said that Shree-Sukta has been written in coded language. In fact, it gives details of a chemical formula, following which gold can be made with a specified mixture and a combination of juices of certain herbs, available in India.

Those who worship a Shree Yantra are advised not to use saffron in their puja-offerings. The best and recommended offering for puja or worship is some vermilion and a natural fragrance called Itra in India. A Shree Yantra should not be worshipped or disturbed at night.

Shree Yantra Shree Chakra

The Wheel of Sri. Suktas use mantras (spells) and yantras (diagrams) in their worship. This diagram is called Srichakra; it symbolises the union of Siva and Sakti. The four triangles with apex pointing upward represent Siva, the five pointing downward depict Sakti. The bindu (also Sakti) is in the smallest triangle with the apex pointing downward.

To propitiate Lakshmi — the Goddess of Wealth & Prosperity, this yantra/Chakra is worshipped as prescribed. A Yantra is a geometrically scientific device/construction. In the spiritual process, a yantra embodies the energies and powers of its deity. In Kularnava Tantra, it is said to denote the relationship between a person's soul with the body, or of oil with the wick of a lamp.

A Yantra is the radiating beam and power of its deity. The Rishis said that every human body is the miniature form of the Universe, consisting of all energy, power, glow or darkness in specific proportions, with an in-built capacity of the vibrations, sound and heat necessary for development, expansion and disintegration in space.

Vastu Shastra

The Rishis have written and codified Vastu Shastra with amazing details about the different dimensions of buildings, temples, forts, townships with their layout, land scaping etc. Architecture was regarded as a venerable science.

In ancient times, architecture was not only the building of a structure to limit or define space; it was inherently a sacred science for three dimensional constructions, erected in harmony with the laws of Creation which surround us with the forms/shapes that exist in Eternity. A sacredness of proportions, materials, a mysticism of harmonies and of colours, a critical choice of right location, orientation, a correct choice of the Nakshtra-hour to start construction activity etc. enabled the matter and form to express in infinity the cosmic truths; to bestow on humanity the multiple benefits of the Infinite.

Bio-electrico-magnetic grid radiations of the earth and the radiations of under ground streams of water, faults in the earth structure/layers, cavities below the surface, and earthquake-prone regions, were graphically represented by snakes. The divine bird Garud is shown as holding the snakes under each claw and not allowing the snakes to cross the indicated mastery over the earth energies.

Human beings are vitally affected by these energies at their place of work, rest, sleep, etc. because the body remains stationed in such areas for long hours. It is of utmost importance to have buildings designed and oriented in such a way that, by themselves, they also generate positive vibrations for success, prosperity and health.

To remain healthy and alert, the brain must constantly receive copious oxygen as well as suitable quality blood supply from the heart. Nature has provided blood barriers near the medulla-oblongata, to reject and return unsuitable blood supply, even if one were to stand on his head. Magnetic polar currents flow from the South Pole to the North. By facing the North, we face the direction of the current which keeps passing over the head and thus helps the brain to remain healthy and strong. These scientific truths explain how and where to sit for Puja, to work in the office, to sleep and rest: Of course, the moon's position in the birth chart of every individual also helps in arriving at correct decisions for the above purposes.

The principles of Vastu Shastra are based on physical geography, rain-fall, isobars, winds, ocean currents, isotherms, natural vegetation, climatic regions, rivers, water resources, mineral areas, density of population etc. of every nation, big or small: Its principles are scientifically accurate if the above aspects are properly understood and reckoned. Its strength is in its knowledge of the country's climate and culture. VastuShastra is basically the utilisation of living space in such a way that it harmonises the person with the elements, by working in harmony with the earth's magnetic currents. In India, in the South-West, we get a lot of sun, so Vastu dictates that this part of the building should be a protective shield for comfortable living areas in the rest of the living quarters. On the North-Eastern side, there is more shadow or mellow sun so this part should be kept open, not necessarily vacant. To explain, in India, every race course has structures on the Western and Southern side so horses run on the North-East: Thus, the South-West is closed and the North-East has remained open. One can build more floors on the Western side while keeping some open terrace on the Eastern side. Again, in a

North-Eastern room, try and provide doors/windows on the Eastern and North-Eastern side, preferably with a balcony or verandah and block the South-Western side. This precaution can ensure no heart ailment for the residents.

In India, as per Vastu Shastra, the North and the East are more auspicious. Select a plot which may be a square, rectangular or shaped like a trapezium; avoid a triangular plot, otherwise you risk blocking the Energy Waves. North-East is the air zone, so the transient utilisation of the space from the Vastu angle, is best suited for a drawing room or guest room; not the master bed-room. The master bed-room is best located in the South-West. If located in the sauth-east, married life will remain inflammable. But the owner can keep his working office here for better energy. The North-East or North corner can be used as a main entrance. The North- East corner is dedicated to water, so water-tanks or tube- wells can be located on this side.

The South-East side is dedicated to fire so locate the kitchen here or in the North-West. If the kitchen is in the South-West, sickness will remain a constant risk.

Best advice is to use one's own common sense in the design and actual construction. For instance, in coastal regions, houses having South and West sides open will have more fresh air. In Chandigarh, India, the renowned architects have provided more windows and less walls. The windows are more rectangular like bricks at eye-level, for better circulation of air and natural light which are healthier living conditions.

Levels inside the Plot

The ground levels should be slightly higher in the South and the West. Ground levels in the North and the East should be lowest in the plot. Levels in the South East and North West should be equal levels. North levels are better lower than the South. East levels should be lower than the West.

Levels outside the Plot

This aspect may not be under the control of the plot owner hence only precautionary observations are mentioned here.

The East and the North levels of the adjoining plot or the road should be lower.

Towards the South and the West, mounds or raised levels are helpful.

Ponds, tanks or rivers in the North or the East or the North- East show good results.

A pond or tank or well or ditches towards the South-West yield bad results.

A high building built towards the South or the West or South-West of the plot is good for prosperity.

Wells or Water Reservoirs

East side well/pond/tank should be towards the North. North side well etc. should be located towards the East. A well in the West or the South or the South-West or North West or South-East, is not good.

A well opposite the main entrance or opposite doors opening outside is risky. Never have a well in the middle of the building — This does not apply to wells built for throwing sweepings etc. down to the

ground floors for collection of rubbish.

Feng Shui is the Chinese art of arranging buildings and their contents in a manner so harmonious with the environment that good fortune is assured or at least bad-luck is averted the basic thought being that the motion of QI — a life giving cosmic breath usually associated with the dragons keeps lurking in natural habitats. Buildings must be so designed that QI — is encouraged to accumulate and circulate in them. As a rule, there is one main accumulation of QI near the dragon's genitals. Indian Rishis also emphasised this area as belonging to Kundalini.

Rudraksha

Rudraksha is the seed (stone) of a fruit of a rare species of a tree found in Nepal, Java, Sumatra and Malaya. In India, it has been found in Haridwar and spotted at some centers in Konkan and Karnataka. It is roundish with a cellular demarcation and has a central bore. Small or unripe, unmatured seeds are of no value. Rarely, a seed with no bore is also seen but then it becomes a piece of great sanctity value if it has only 1 cell mark. The cellular mark/division varies from 1 to 21 per seed. The Rishis observed these peculiarities and made detailed investigations because they noticed that every seed is a ball of energy but the efficacy quantum differed from piece to piece with different cellular markings but there was no difference in any two identical seeds. Rudraksha's hold a place of pride in the Rigveda, Atharwaveda, Skand Puran and other scriptures because of their beneficial properties of attracting healthy vibrations. Saints wear it as a necklace; the Rishis had deified it as an ornament of Lord Shiva. Because of its varying energy potential, rare availability and sanctity as accorded by the Rishis, they are very much in demand by believers; people are willing to pay any price for a one cell Rudraksha without a bore. The most common and easily available variety is the 5 cell mark.

A real Rudraksha is solid in construction hence it sinks in a bowl filled with water. A fake piece will float. There are many other scientific tests to determine its purity/efficacy, and aroma. Its aromatic property helps a devotee to go into deep meditation faster. It must be remembered that the Rudraksha must not rub against itself or even with the fingers of a devotee so its use in a rosary is forbidden because rubbing/ friction can erode its potentiality and charm property. It can be worn on the neck threaded with gold/silver wire or in a silk or woolen thread so that it remains in gentle touch with the body to boost immunity. Just as a doctor uses a stethoscope to examine a patient, enlightened saints use a Rudraksh to read the personality and fortune of disciple. It determines positive or negative energy currents flowing in the body of every person, at any time. The blood pressure of the wearer becomes normal. Its energy charges help and strengthen the heart, reduces tension

According to Ayurveda, it is said to be sour and hot. It quenches thirst if, milk with a minute quantity of its paste is mixed and drank. Sages advise to put one or two seeds in a silver or copper pot or water jug, and sip that water whenever thirsty to keep blood pressure under control.

A single seed retains the efficacy for about one month. Lightening does not strike the wearer; protects him from accidents; and bestows good luck. Persons with positive energy currents should wear it on the right hand; those with negative currents on the left hand, for better results: Persons wearing Rudraksh are held in high esteem.

Sacred Thread

A thick tuft of hairs on the head, a rosary in hand, a prominent Tilak or Tripund on the forehead and a sacred thread across the torso are the accepted symbols of being a holy man by the Hindus.

To encourage cooperation and establish order in society, Hindus had divided the life span of every person into four distinct divisions — Brahmacharya — the celebate life of a student; Grihasta — family life; Vanprastha — the third portion of life when a person should detach himself from family bonds and endeavour to serve the society; and Sanyasa — when a person should finally renounce the world. In this final stage, the person ceases to belong to his family, caste, or creed. Instead, he devotes himself to spread the message of the scriptures of love and benevolence and simultaneously practices Yogic Sadhna to illuminate his own self to attain salvation. There is no sanction for leading an idle life and becoming a burden on society or to look to pass life in an old-age-home run with the help of others. To make life simpler and enjoyable, Lord Shree Krishna preached secularism, saying, "I have divided mankind in four stages (Ashrams) as per their competence/capability and deeds (calling) or professions so, there is no need for any class conflict, or haves and have-nots in society."

By birth, every child is a Shudra because they cannot clean themselves. As the child grows, it develops his/her talents. Just as a uniform is compulsory in good educational institutions, similarly, the child used to be initiated in a Gurukul (co-educational institution) run by some renowned Rishis and at that time, a sacred thread ceremony used to be performed by the Guru to denote that the boy or girl is now reborn and adopted in an intellectual society.

After completing his educational career, the Brahmachari was free to join the ancestral family business and excel in it or if his talents dictated any other career, surtech-over after proving himself worthy of it. Thus, every young person had a birthright to progress in his family business without any apprehension of discrimination; and for diversion, he had to prove his worth. Exceptions to good rules exist everywhere; the intervening dark age period aggravated the situation and misunderstandings cropped up, giving room to class struggles for existence and survival. There was no caste system initially; the classification would be based on the reputation of the Gurukul and the reputation of the Rishi running it: The nature and requirements of other professions began the class/ calling.

The Rishis did not propagate mass education because ordinarily every human being has a limited intelligence/ competence/capability for excellence: Only a born genius or a person gifted with dexterity and zeal could rise above contemporaries by virtue of his/her excellence and for such persons, the sky was the limit for attaining Moksh (salvation). Thus, the Rishis offered an equal opportunity to all students and disciples to prove their merit without caste considerations or family.

A sacred thread consists of hand-spun yarn of specific length: Three equal lengths of the yarn are twisted together to make one standard length. Thus, three twisted yarn lengths are tied together and after a well defined sacred thread ceremony, the student used to be initiated, to give him a sacred status: The student was advised to wear the sacred thread like a cross belt on his body. The three twisted threads represented the Trinity of Gods; or three virtues of life — Satogun (pious living),

Rajogun (imperious living), and Tamogun (vicious living); The 3×3 also represented Navagrah — nine planets recognised by astrology; as also the nine outlets of every human being — one mouth, two nostrils, two eyes, two ears, one genital organ and the anus, The rishis vested the disciple with a sacred thread in order that he should constantly remember having taken a vow to keep under check and control, these nine outlets for a healthy, long life.

The wearer of the sacred thread becomes a leader because every thread blesses the wearer with increased longevity: All the threads are bright white so they add to the person's aura and moral strength. There can be no dispute in acquiring knowledge by deeds and single minded efforts.

Zoroastrians also wear a sacred thread as a belt around their lumber region. Wearing a belt is recommended by medical science too, to keep the lumber region vertebras in position and in proper alignment, hence the military, police, security guards and others have adopted this practice. However, the Rishis did not recommended wearing it around the back in order to retain its purity and sacredness as the lumber region is considered to be unhygienic. Additionally, the wearer was told to use it for tying around the ear while attending to nature's calls. Rishi Sushrut and Rishi Charak recommended this practice as a health need to keep the veins of the ears and nose in an alert position; and the Dhoti (Loin cloth) around the back to keep the lumber region in good shape/alignment. This is better expressed and explained in acupressure therapy.

Deepak Jyoti Flame

'tamso ma jyotirgamaya'

"Lead me Oh! kindly light (flame), lead me from darkness to light! No person feels happy with living in darkness. The Rishis always worshiped 'Jyoti' (flame) as being the purest of the pure because it consumes all impurities, yet it remains pure. They worshipped fire, the lightening in the clouds, God Sun, Moon, and also the twinkling stars emitting dim light to remove the darkness. The electric bulb cannot light up another bulb so the bulb is not worshipped but a Deepak (lamp or a candle) takes pride in lighting up another Deepak, even at the cost of burning out itself. The Sun and Moon do give light but they are up above in the sky; they are constantly moving away, whereas the fire/flame remains on earth as the eternal companion of mankind.

> *Skand Purān says, "fire burns up every thing, whereas a lamp,and a candle destroy darkness and spreads light."*
>
> "Oh lamp, I bow to thee; You are supreme God; You are Shree Krishna; you burn up our sins, 1 bow to thee!"

A flame can infuse knowledge, and wisdom and thus make others happy. The navigators remain on the right track by seeing the beams of a light-house.

Bhagwan Buddha addressed his disciples saying, "Oh enlightened souls become a lamp to spread the glow of light and thus brighten up every thing."

"Who will take up my work?" asks the setting sun. None had an answer in the whole world: An earthen lamp humbly said, "I will, my Lord as best as I can." 'As a lamp in windless place does not flicker', this is the simile used to discipline the mind of a Yogi, practising concentration on God.

A lamp is a earthen saucer like container. It is filled with Ghee (Butter), then a twisted cotton tape is immersed into it and the top end is lit in every Hindu home and temple. The tape keeps sucking the ghee to yield a cool bright light, a flame. Burning oil is not recommended, because it produces black smoke soot.

In nature, the flame is considered to be the source of infinite energy of positive currents. If you have an even number of flames side by side or opposite each other, they cancel each other's radiation and become harmful: The smallest flame of any type radiates infinite energy. This explains the value and sanctity of odd numbers of flames. Great emphasis was laid on 'ārti' in India at the time of concluding any worship or Havan. The ārti (flame) is moved around the idol for devotees to have a look at the deity from top to toe. Then the devotees put out their palms to receive the arti aura; in those few seconds the body's energy level rises to that of the flame.Scientists have tried interesting applications of a flame to cure certain physical ailments. It is believed to be a germ killer.

The Rishis and enlightened souls aroused the Kundalini from Her seat to rise up and illuminate all Yogic-Chakras upto the Sahasrar (Thalamus). Flame and light always elevate the depressed into beaming joy!

Ringing of Bell, Sounds

(Ghanta, Dhwani)

Centuries ago, all the children used to go to a Gurukul (a Residential Institutions for total studies), situated in forests, away from townships. The killing of beasts, reptiles, birds etc. in and around the Gurukul was strictly prohibited yet all the students, teachers and residents had to be protected from beastly attacks. Besides animal attacks, all the inmates had to be protected from various diseases, infections and weather changes throughout their educational career — students returned home only after completing studies of their chosen careers.

After meticulous research and experiments, the Rishis discovered that metallic sounds and strong wind currents can kill bacteria and germs and also drive away the beasts. To create effective sound with single instruments, a bell was determined to be the best device because a bell cast with metal alloys of different metals, in specified composition of eight different metals, made the most effective sound with a resounding echo which spread in the surroundings. The composition and dimension of metal alloys were also determined scientifically. Regular rhythmic ringing of heavy and light bells and plates which were beaten like drums was introduced and made compulsory at the time of every worship, every day, to invoke the deity's blessings for all inmates, as is done in all churches to summon the faithful for prayers.

Africans also use the bell to ring out the poison of snake bite and witch doctors also do so.

In 1916, the High Court of England had deputed three eminent scientists to ascertain the effects of bell ringing: The scientists established that with the sound of a standard bell, physical and mental diseases could be cured: Rhythmic sound is pleasing to the ear. In 1928, Berlin University conducted intensive research and found that with loud sounds of the bell or the blowing of conch, upto 27 cubic feet of air gets purified in an area of 1220 sq. ft. and declared it to be the most economical way of killing bacteria and purifying the surroundings. In Chicago Dr. Bryne cured 1300 patients of their deafness.

In World War II the Germans had produced float mines filled with a humming sound akin to that of war planes so, whenever any enemy plane flew over such a mine and the two humming sounds coincided, the plane burst in mid air.

The Rishis had classified the sounds in different categories for different purposes. For war preparations and during war, the conch, damroo, nagara, damdama, bheri, turhi etc. were used. For appealing music bansuri, flute, veena, sarangi, santoor etc. were used to the accompaniment of tabla, mridangam etc. For worship, the blowing of conch, bells of different dimensions, the beating of metallic-alloy plates, kartal jhanj, majira etc. were common.

In temples, from early morning till late night, the devotees continue to chant hymns, prayers and songs using musical instruments, in order to invoke divine blessings via different sound waves. This explains the purity and sanctity of sanctum sanctorum.

The Rishis had discovered that the universe is filled with different sounds and notes so they codified each note, gave it a form and a correct, appropriate pronunciation. Sanskrit has 50 alphabets

encompassing the whole universe. They sanctified each alphabet with a specific potency or energy; From 'A' to 'Ha' (Z), every letter is endowed with energy and potency: When correctly uttered and pronounced, the potency, appropriate for the occasion/situation, radiates/ materialises. This can be learnt from a self-realised Siddha- Saint only. Audio tapes also recite and repeat prayers when played, but their sound does not produce any real effect because they lack the life force of human vibrations, which a Siddha-Saint alone can infuse. This explains the value attached to blessings so eagerly sought from elders/ enlightened persons.

The world scientists have also proved that with sweet and melodious music, the yield of milk from bovines increases: and saplings become healthier and grow faster. The Rishis could tame the tiger or the snake alike with the chanting of effective prayers. Accomplished faith healers claim to cure diseases and achieve successes when they persue with full faith and concentrated meditation on the fulfillment of desired objective, with the true techniques as established by Rishis: If any of these factors and appropriate pronunciation of a Mantra is absent, the effort becomes futile. This is the concretisation of sounds.

Wish Fulfilling Cows

The Rishis had propagated cow worship ages ago, when the word Hindu was not known. Mercy or pity for the helpless is the kindest sentiment/emotion. Cows provide health, nourishment and easily digestible milk for everyone; cow- dung is the best fertiliser and it is the best material for feeding a bio-gas-plant for generating the required electricity and also for doemstic energy. Cows give birth to bullocks for agricultural processes and surface transport by bullock carts in return for very little care, fodder and water; cows are pure vegetarians so they never become ferocious unless they are very badly treated, but once they become furious they become belligerent and can fight a lion too for self protection, hence cows deserve greater reverence from human beings in comparison with other animals. This is why the Rishis advocated cow-worship as the worship of one's own mother: This respectful and kind treatment of the cow also point their compassion for all animals, even beasts. There is no other animal so very beneficial and economical for humanity.

Bhagwan Shree Krishna treated cows and calfs as companions.

Prophet Mohammed also advocated cow worship in the Holy Quran; not cow slaughter.

Kamdhenu was the sacred cow of Gods. Her daughter — Nandini was gifted to Rishi Vashishtha, by God Indra.

Emperor Dilip regarded it his sacred duty to tend to this cow daily because Nandini was gifted with wish fulfilling power. The other well known cow was called Kapila.

According to Ayurveda, the best and healthiest milk is obtained from a black cow; the second best is a reddish- brown coloured skin cow: White or spotted cows are considered normal cows.

Conch Shell Shankh

The shankh was obtained as a gift from the great ocean- churning. The spiral formation inside the conch-shell is symbolic of infinite space which gradually expands in clock-wise direction.

All natural conch shells yield cosmic sounds called Anahat Nād (pervading throughout the universe). Despite apparent total silence in the atmosphere, the cosmic sound remains vibrating. One can listen to this sound by holding the conch shell close to the ear, with the sharp tip outlet facing upward.

An attractive Shankh with its mouth on the right side was accepted by God Vishnu and another with a left-side opening adorns the hand of Goddess Lakshmi, hence both these special types are considered auspicious. The blowing of a Shankh heralds every important event and auspicious celebration to call the faithfuls at the beginning of worship of the deity.

On the battle field of Kuru Kshetra in the Mahabharat every morning, the start of warfare was signaled by the blowing of the shankh and again every evening, the war for that day would end with the blowing of the shankh. Every great king and army-chief had his own particular shankh. Some of the famous known shankhs are:

Panchjanya	:	This shankh was always used by Shree Krishna;
Devadatta	:	was used by Arjun;
Maha Shankh	:	was used by Bhimma;
Anant Vijay	:	was used by Yudhishthir;
Mani Pushpa	:	was used by Sahadeva;
Sughosh	:	was used by Nakul; and
Poundra	:	was used by Vrikodar

Divine Musical Instruments

The Aryans had developed several musical instruments suitable for every occasion ceremony. Some typical, yet very simple musical instruments became attributes of Gods and Goddesses.

DAMRU	:	A small hand drum was adopted by God Shiva:
BANSURI	:	A bamboo flute which became a close companion of Shree Krishna:
VEENA		Saraswati Goddess of Learning and Fine-arts adopted the veena as her celestial

	:	musical Instrument
BHERI &TURHI	:	Were used by the army in accompaniment with nagara and dhol to announce war or Some such uncommon event.
BINA & KARTAL	:	These instruments were used by Rishi Narad and later became popular with almost all saints

Betel Leaf

(Called Paan)

Preservation and propagation of flora and fauna were an essential activity of life. All trees and creepers are man's best friends. The peepal, amla, banyan, ashok, palash, goolar, shami, neem etc. are worshipped everywhere in India. The leaves of mango and Ashok are tied in a long string and hung at the entrance to welcome deities and VIP guests. During worship or rituals, leaves from select trees are used as essential accessories, but amongst all leaves, the betel leaf enjoys a place of pride. In Hindu weddings, a betel leaf is tucked into the head-gear of the bride and bridegroom. The use of the betel leaf is considered noble on all auspicious celebrations, betel leaves and a few other leaves have become symbolic items denoting freshness and prosperity.

In the Skand Puran it is written that the betel leaf was obtained by the ocean churning. The Mahabharat narrates that after their victory, the Pandavas decided to perform Rajsuya Yagnya. The performing sages asked for betel leaves to start the preparations but alas, the leaves were not available, so Arjun was advised to go to Nag-Lok, the kingdom of snakes, in order to procure them. Arjun approached the Vasuki Nag queen to oblige. The queen was pleased with Arjun's appeal, cut a phalange of her little finger, gave it to Arjun and advised him to sow the phalange from which a creeper would grow and sprout many leaves. Since the seed of this creeper was a human phalange, this creeper is not blessed with any kind of flower or fruit. Thus, the paan creeper was obtained from the snake queen Vasuki and it is called Nag-Valli or Nagarbel.

Paan has enjoyed political overtones too, by becoming a prestigious link between two mighty civilizations. The Aryans ruled North India and the South was ruled by the Dravids. Rishi Jamadagni has his Ashram on mount Mahendra in Utkal, ruled by the Nag kings. According to katha Sarit-Sagar, queen Surigawati had taken shelter in the Ashram of sage Jamdagni. Her son, Prince Udayan saw paan leaves in the Ashram for the first time and requested his mother to ask for a paan creeper as a souvenir. Thus, Paan became prestigious because the Nag king was pleased to present the creeper to the Prince and this exchange formed a vital link between the North and the South. Mention of the use of betel leaf in some form or another is present in all famous epics — Ramayan, Mahabharat, as well as Buddha and Jain scriptures.

Paan has rich herbal properties. It is invigorating and energising, a killer of germs/bacteria and eliminator of cough. It is astonishing that eating a fresh betel leaf is forbidden by Ayurveda on the ground that it can cause blisters on the tongue and increase acidity, whereas if it is kept in water for one full day and then eaten, it becomes digestive. In the book *Rajvallabh*, it is specifically mentioned that before eating a paan, pluck its stalk, cut the edge tip and scrap its veins because all these are injurious for human health in general and the brain in particular. In Nighntu, (the great Ayurvedic compilation by sage Dhanwantari), it is mentioned that two varieties of betel leaf can be eaten — whitish and blackish: The blackish variety is said to be constipative and the whitish eliminates cough and contains digestive properties.

Coconut — Shriphal — Nariyal

For success and prosperity on all occasions, the beginning is done with the breaking of a sanctified coconut; and small bits of the kernel are distributed amongst all the assembled persons. All religious functions and rituals start with worshiping a coconut because it is regarded as the symbolic Ganesh — the deity due to whose benevolence, the job or performance undertaken attains its successful conclusion without any hindrance. While starting his first lesson, the student offers a coconut to the Guru (teachers), with a request to initiate teaching.

Sage Vishwamitra is said to be the creator of this wonder fruit. When the Gods pushed down king Trishanku from heaven, Vishwamitra became furious and decided to challenge Brahma (the creator of the universe) and announced that he would create a parallel world. He began with creating artificial summer by changing the refreshing weather around October. The sultry heat of four weeks duration is called Vishwamitra's summer. In place of human heads, he created coconuts with two eye like sockets and a beard. While he was readying himself to infuse life in the coconuts, Lord Brahma appeared and advised him to give up his project. Vishwamitra agreed to give up provided the coconut was blessed with dignity and respectability. Brahama conceded, saying that all auspicious functions and celebrations shall be solemnised with the presence of the coconut and added that if any pious housewife would eat the seed of a one eyed coconut, she shall be blessed with a child. Thus, sage Vishwamitra agreed to give up his project, but in order to endear his wonder fruit to posterity, he added symbolic powers.

For any person engaged in spiritual pursuits, the coconut symbolises crowning success. Its hard kernel inspires one to do hard work to attain success and glory; indicates concerted effort to break the barriers of wandering thoughts and desires, when its hard shell is broken, the bliss of self realisation can be experienced like pure white and sweet kernel, and the milk of kindness flows to bless. The worldly persons gain strength, improved eye sight by eating the kernel; sick and elderly persons find its milky water nourishing. Ladies apply its oil for luxurious hair-growth with silky shine.

Coconuts contain glucose, phosphorus, and carbohydrates in adequate measure hence are good for diabetics. Mountaineers carry coconuts with them to quench their thirst and hunger on high altitudes. As germs do not penetrate its shell, it remains edible for several months. Blessed with these sublime herbal and dietary properties, the coconut became a much sought after fruit for gifts, and also became an essential ingredient for many tasty dishes, including biscuits. The crop does not get damaged by rats or white-ants, reptiles or birds. Its timber is fibrous and strong its stem is used to bridge rivulets, thus its farming is very economical and profitable.

It also has enviable chemical properties. Vaidyas (doctors) burn its outer shell to prepare tooth powder, cream for brushing the eye-brows, and for making some healing ointments. Its oil accelerates the healing of burns. To cure dehydration, it is advisable to mix a few drops of lemon juice in a cup full of coconut water and the patient is advised to sip the mixture for a sure cure. Its outer shell is used for making attractive handicrafts and bangles, toys and wall hangings. The burnt shell powder is extensively used in the paint industry. Its husk is rich in strong fibres so it is used as a filler material for sofa sets and cushions and car seats.

Spiritually speaking, this fruit represents and symbolises a deep rooted truth. In its raw stage, it remains like any other being, quite undetachable with worldly belongings — the kernel remains inseparably attached to the shell just as every human being remains attached to worldly possessions; but when it dries up, the kernel detaches itself from the shell like a holy saint — totally detached from worldly attachments, and possessions. Hence, when the shell is broken, pure and sweet kernel comes out for benefit of humanity like a holy saint.

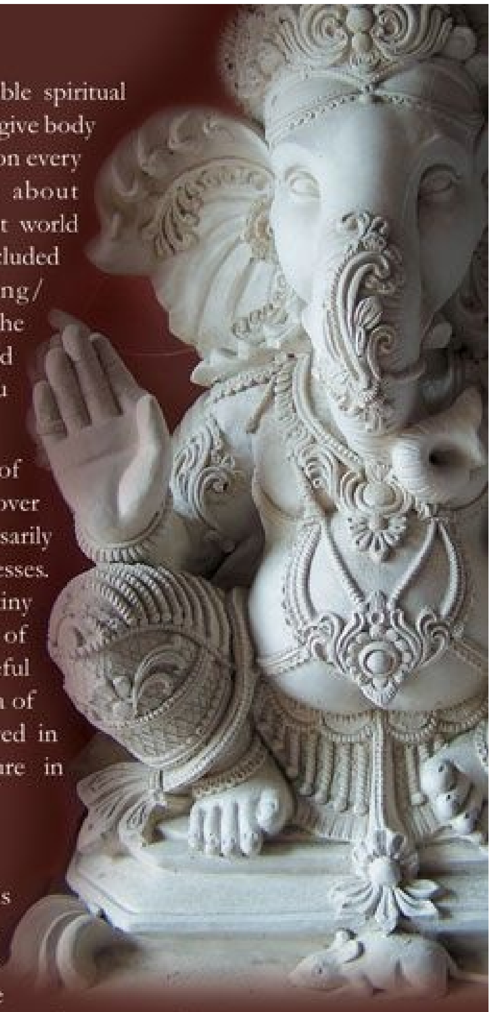
"vajrādapi kathorāni, mrudinim kusmādapi."

Those who have succeeded in reaching the mind of man correctly, they can be as impregnable as steel, and also tender like a flower. This is an apt description of a coconut — hard externally, yet sweet and nourishing from within.

Thus, every inch of the coconut plant and its fruit are a great boon to humanity. Hindus consider it a very auspicious omen to receive or give this fruit. It is also called Shreephal because it denotes prosperity: Such wondrous dedication in the service of humanity without discrimination!

This book highlights attainable spiritual virtues in modern times. To give body and force to the narrations on every topic, authentic information about experiments conducted by eminent world scientists and clairvoyants is included instead of abstract reasoning/ arguments. The book will fascinate the young and the old, Indian and foreigner, Hindu and non-Hindu alike.

Cultural symbols are emblems of divine and human sovereignty over temporal life. A symbol must necessarily suggest more than what it expresses. Every symbol is pragmatic like a tiny seed which proclaims its potentiality of becoming a blooming tree. A careful look at the symbols opens up a vista of knowledge and the success achieved in revealing the mysteries of Nature in Universe.



About the Author

Jhaver P. Shreeniwas was born in a pious family at Gwalior on 18th July 1917. He served in varying capacities in different organisations for over three decades before dedicating his life to be of service and help to the weaker sections of society. He specialises in Acupressure Therapy blended with yogic exercises and gives free treatment to the needy.

Elevate Your Life. Transform Your World.

JAICO BOOKS

www.jaicobooks.com

Spirituality

ISBN-10: 81-7224-736-2

9788172247362

₹ 225